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S. MOORISH CITIES



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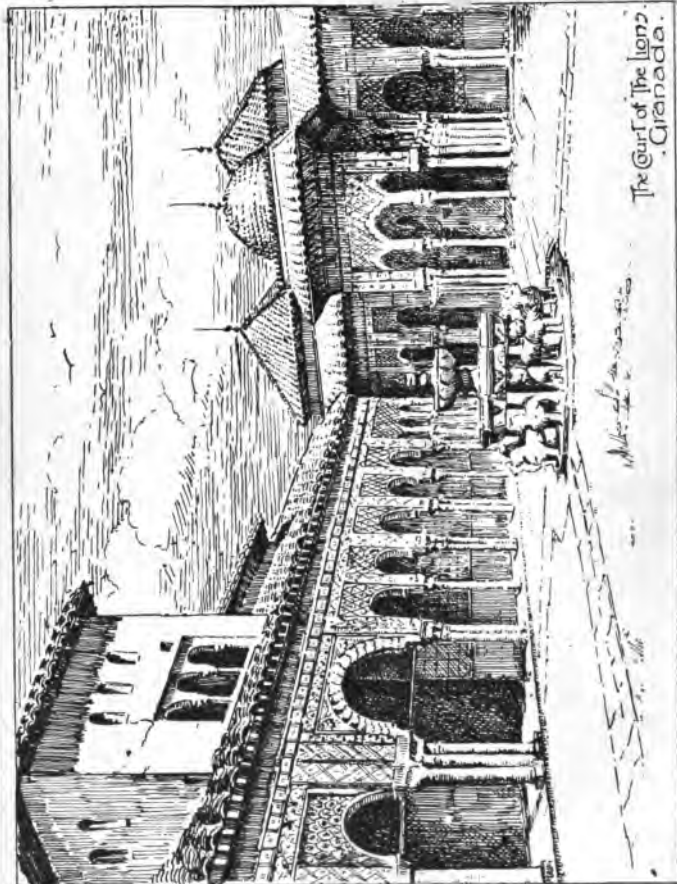
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The Court of the Lions,  
Granada.

*Alhambra, Granada, Spain.*



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# MOORISH CITIES IN SPAIN

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"A RECORD OF SPANISH PAINTING"

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*Gift of  
Prof. R. B. Merriman*

TO ALL WHO LOVE SPAIN

"In every country there lurks a personality,  
and the contemplation of the memories of  
the lands where one has lived . . . brings  
with it a strange sense of the incomprehen-  
sible promptings of caprice."

HUBERT CRACKENTHORPE

THE CRIMBLES  
YOULGREAVE, DERBYSHIRE  
*April 1906*

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# CÓRDOVA

“Córdoba, casa de guerrera gente y de sabiduría clara fuente.”

MOTTO OF CÓRDOVA.

## I

CÓRDOVA is a city of sleep; it rests in a quiet and beautiful dream. There is an atmosphere grave, nay, almost sad, about it; and this impression comes unsought. You gather it as you wander about in narrow streets, or stand to gaze at the whitewashed houses, generally low, often mean in appearance, though here and there a vacant palace speaks of a great tradition broken; while perhaps, strongest of all, the feeling comes when, after a walk down the newly fashioned Paseo de la Victoria, you reach the Puerta de Almodóvar. Here the ruins of the Moorish walls seem dumbly conscious of the separateness of the present from the past. And the stranger gazing from the desolateness and loneliness of these austere stones—almost all that is left of a great work of architecture—to the landscape beyond, with its superb view of the blue Sierra to the north and the Great River flowing in the south, finds the reason for the plaintive note that is never silent in Córdoba.

To see the sun hanging amid an azure sky, to watch through long indefinite minutes the indigo wreaths of shadow draping the rugged heights of the Sierra de Córdoba, to hear the dull swirl of the river, then to turn and gaze at the city, white and motionless in the blaze of the midday sun, still encircling the sweep of the Guadalquivir, as it tumbles and eddies in its wide bed, clasped tight from bank to bank by the great Moorish bridge—these things evoke reflections on the ever-changing fate of Spain. Sad indeed is the place, sad and strangely suggestive, for the reason that we shall scarcely find elsewhere a city whose past sleeps so completely.

But, leaving the Puerta de Almodóvar, with its symbol of decay, walk to the slightly higher ground where the line of the broad *paseo*, shaded by young, thick-spreading olive-trees, curves with the grace of some beautiful forest avenue, and you will see Córdoba spread out like a chart before you—a kind of semi-circular amphitheatre, built upon a very gentle declivity, which girds the curved bank of the Guadalquivir.

The hot southern sunlight pours like a flood of fire over the scene, purifying and sharpening the outlines of the buildings, kindling answering lights, here and there, in the window glass and on the tiled roofs of the houses, flaming around the Moorish towers, lightening the whitewashed walls to dazzling clearness, and transforming the atmosphere into a blaze of brightness that calls up everywhere rich contrasts of colour. When the sky is pure sapphire, and the landscape quivers with the heat, then you will see Córdoba in a scene that will stamp itself for ever on the imagination—a scene that shall arouse as fanatical an enthusiasm as

the wondrous views of Florence or of Naples. Nothing



is wanting to complete the harmony—there lies the whole city sleeping around the great slow-flowing yellow river.

And as you linger to look at it all, the spell of the past falls upon you. You watch the delicious play of pure colour. . . . Is it the sunshine that deceives you? Suddenly sleeping memories, so suggestive beneath the city's apparent quiet, seem to awaken the streets into blithe gladness. And before your imagination arises a vision of Córdoba in the tenth century, when she gained the name of "the Bride of Andalusia." Córdoba of the past is an idea to conjure with. For a moment all the history of the city, all its splendid, stately record holds your memory. For always in Andalusia more than half the charm rests in what you divine rather than in what you see.

And slowly, as a vision comes, a new city springs into sight—a great dream city spread between the Sierra and the river, with the whisper of the water on one side and the stillness of the mountains on the other; a city of wealth, of beauty, of glory, of learning, sending the influence of its culture like rain upon the earth. You catch the gleam of fifty thousand palaces built of marble and of jasper; you note the flash of fountains of quicksilver and hear the tinkle of water; you see the great library of Al Hakím, the wonder of the world, and the nine hundred public baths which beautified the city. Then you look into enchanting gardens, whose very names speak of the sense of joy. "The Meadow of Murmuring Waters," "The Garden of the Waterwheel"—what magic lingers in the suggestion of the words. The minarets of seven hundred mosques seem to tower proudly up, interlacing with the sky; and in the distance the sunlight seems to flash and rest in gladness upon the suburb of Az-Zahrâ.



You look back : just below you to the right you see the Great Mosque, its yellow walls, gigantic, blotting out the sky—the one reality in this dream landscape. But you turn away. The whole charm of such a vision lies in its vagueness. What is it but a sort of mental impression? And slowly you walk back to the Puerta de Almodóvar; again in the crumbling, interrupted wall you find a centre for these inevitable memories.

## II

“¿ Señora, mezquita? ” “¿ Señora, mezquita? ”

The gently interrogated cry hummed around me. Each Córdovese I encountered, as I strolled down the old-world Calle de Jesús Marie, on my first visit to the Great Mosque, surmised my desire, and directed me without question of mine. This imperishable building was, they knew, the most interesting lure in their city—it was to visit this the stranger came to Córdoba.

Presently I turned into the Calle de Céspedes—that street with its memories of the painter-poet of Córdoba—and, of a sudden, I saw a dark outline of great walls, uprising high above the other buildings, stand out square and dark against the blue of the sky. It was the Mosque, and I hurried onwards.

The Mosque of Córdoba is one of the buildings that one can never forget. Certain churches are thus memorable, but they are not many—only to a few sanctuaries is it given to put language into their masonry. But whenever you find this charm in architecture—and surely you find it nowhere more often than in Spain?—I think it consists in a power of

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expressing a separate existence. It is as if the building had had a history and individuality apart, which forces you to carry away a distinct impression of its character. Maybe you are impelled by its beauty, perchance you dislike it, but it is impossible that you remain indifferent; as impossible as it is to forget some people. The Mosque, viewed from without, is like a sad and proud spirit absorbed in the travail of its past. Its greatest beauty rests in its aloofness—some haunting and ever-present expression speaks, as it were, in the strength of its stones.

Stand for a moment in the sunny stillness where the Calle del Perdón joins the Calle de Torrijos, and you will not easily part with the impression of those great stretches of embattled walls, made strong with the tower-like buttresses that break the long lines of its massive structure. In the sunlight the whole building glows; the yellow-brown stones, mellowed by the work of the quiet centuries, take many shades, but all are variations of the same warm colour, very rich and very harmonious—a kind of grave brilliancy that I know not how to describe.

It is worth while to walk around the outside of the Mosque and, forgetting for a moment the instinct for examination, gain an impression of the naked greatness of its structure. To see this vast square of masonry, where what remains of its original glory of mosaic decoration is little more than a delicate suggestion, is to realise all that was strongest in the Moorish work. Here there is nothing that is fantastic, no elaboration of accumulated details; instead, almost a contempt for effect—only bulk and height in admirable proportions. The beauty is entirely the beauty of construction. It

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is by its immensity—the simplicity of its great surfaces, like the front of some old castle with the towers and great doorways level with the walls—by its great suggestion of power that the exterior of the Mosque is impressive. You are silenced and held by this effect of strength, so rare, so new in its appeal.

### III

It is one of the many surprises of the Mosque to come suddenly through the Puerta del Perdón—that imposing gateway, not Moorish, as it seems, but a later Christian addition, built in imitation of the gate at Seville Cathedral—into the Court of Oranges. And perhaps my most agreeable memory of the time I spent in Córdoba is the recollection of the delightful sensation I gained as I found my way into this Court, where the water of the fountains and the leafy shade of orange-trees gave coolness, that first burning afternoon, when the heat grew intolerable in the streets. I sat among the orange-trees that were dressed out in their spring garb of soft green and cream-white; leaning back against one of the trees, with the shadow of sunny leaves above me, the sweet strong perfume of Andalusia around me—that strange blending of orange-blossoms, incense, and cigarette fumes that you find so often in Spain—and the rhythm of the fountains whispering to me in the soft warm air, and I realised something of the untiring charm and the dreamy peace of Oriental repose. Life seemed so much simpler and easier here; and I shall be glad always that I enjoyed that exquisite hour.

In the centre of the Court, around the fountain of Abd-er-Rahmān, where the water flowed into the great marble basin softly from jets at each of the four corners, a group of women were standing. Each carried her red-brown pitcher for water ; one of them was very beautiful, tall, pale, with finely modelled cheeks, and eyes that seemed to change each second in the light—exquisitely posed as she stood for a moment to talk, when she had placed her filled pitcher upon her head, where the carnations gave a spot of pure colour. I think she was the most beautiful woman that I saw in Andalusia, and I was very sorry that she went so soon.

All the afternoon the women came into the Court through the Puerta del Perdón, one by one, or in groups together. Sometimes one would put down her pitcher of water, cross the Court slowly and go into the Mosque, pushing aside the heavy curtain. In truth worship here was a part of the day's work. Now and then came a sound of laughter as a youth, also with a vessel in his hand, joined the women ; and the soft echoes of the voices as they lingered among the trees seemed to make the silence more insistent. In the cloisters a few figures moved slowly up and down : they were the canons ; each was smoking a cigarette ; one walked a few paces into the Court to speak to two ladies in black *mantillas*. People drowsed on the stone benches under the shade cast by the building. A group of beggars crouched upon a low seat by the great entrance door ; they, too, were smoking cigarettes and seemed quite content ; two of them were asleep, apparently, but each still held out a hand for alms. Then a band of acolytes in scarlet cassocks came from

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the chancery towards the Mosque, making a line of flame. And presently a sound of music ; there was a service in the Mosque, and the boys were singing the *coplas* in honour of the Virgin. The soft tones were like a penetrating perfume ; enticing, full of repose that is beauty, heavy with memories, the Moorish Court became mysterious as a romance.

Nowhere else in Córdoba do the past and present seem so interfused, and, as it were, so at one. All the genius of the Moorish work, all the power and life they have left in stone seem to tremble in the glowing stillness of this outer court of worship ; never was any mystical temple of God more a part of the life of its city. Here is all the splendour of colour, enveloped in light and silence, that to-day gives Córdoba its beauty ; here, too, is the delicate Moorish spirit, and the suggestion of the Moorish history. In this contrast the great charm of the place is summed up, and it is this, largely, which makes its appeal so distinctive, at once so surprising and alluring. And these things speak so clearly that one seems carried back across the broad wilderness of time. Legends and facts crowd close upon one's memory. Lulled by the warmth and the delicious play of colour, reflection comes unsought, and one pauses before one enters the Mosque to recall the drama of its history.

#### IV

Look in the corner of the Court : those great worn columns of stone come from the early temple of Janus. Here is the first dim shadow of history—a memory of

pagan Rome, when Córdoba was captured by M. Marcellus, and under the name of Colonia Patricia was the capital of Hispania Ulterior.

But the scene opens in the eighth century, when the Christian church of San Vicente stood upon the site of the Mosque.

Already the great battle of Guadalete had been fought ; already the Moors had shed streams of proud blood ; and Andalusia had been given into their hands. In a single night they entered Córdoba. The Gothic nobles fled ; the remnant of the people resisted for three months—beleaguered, some say, in San Vicente, though the more probable refuge was the church of San Acisclo, near to the Sierra de Córdoba—then yielded.

Even in these early years the Moors, with their primitive but fierce Oriental fatalism, practised instinctively the fine principles of chivalry ; and among other concessions, the conquered Spaniards were permitted to retain their worship. And now a strange arrangement was made in San Vicente. One half of the building was consecrated to Allah, the other was held by the Christians, and for a space of years each worshipped side by side, and the chant of the *Agnus Dei* mingled with the muttered prayers of Islam.

How easy to enlarge upon the significance of all this. Thinking of it, as you still rest under the colonnades of the orange-trees, you realise something of the passive tolerance of the Moors—a tolerance born not of pity, but of indifference ; that quiet acceptance of things as they are, unknown to the restless West—a quietness that haunts you everywhere in Córdoba as a lingering dream. And you learn yet another secret of the sleeping city's charm.

But the scene changes.

In the spring of the year 755 a new brilliant page was written in Spain's romance. Córdoba, thus far a secondary town, subject to the Kalifate of Damascus, was conquered anew. Christians, Berbers, and Arabs alike yielded to Abd-er-Rahmān, the first of the Omeyyads of Córdoba. His policy was to found an empire in Andalusia which would outrival in splendour that of his enemies, the Abbāside Khalifs, who had overthrown the Omeyyads at Damascus, and transferred the Government to Baghdad.

And for this dream of earthly dominion a temple was needed more glorious than any other temple in the world. The Christian half of San Vicente was purchased, the church destroyed, and in 784 the foundations of the Mosque were laid. Eighty thousand gold pieces Abd-er-Rahmān expended, and each day he worked, it is said, for one hour at the building with his own hands: four years later, when he died, the original Mosque—about one-fifth the size of the present structure—was well advanced. His son, Hishām I., known for his learning and piety, completed it in 793. He erected the first minaret where the muezzins chanted the hours of prayer, built the *as-sakīfer*, an open gallery for women, and placed the *al-mīda* fountain in the centre of the outer court. This monolith was hewn in the quarries of the Sierra, and seventy oxen and a hundred men were needed to carry it to its place.

Then for more than two centuries the Mosque grew in size and splendour, as each succeeding Khalif added some new beauty. One overlaid the clustered columns with gold; another began the decoration of the walls

and entrance gates, encircling them with legends from the Koran in arabesques of gilt and scarlet ; another summoned Byzantine artists to enrich the interior with shining glass mosaics. The great Khalif Abd-er-Rahmān III. added a new, larger, and more beautiful minaret, crowned with the famous apples of gold and silver ; the exquisite Mihrāb was built by Al-Hakīm II. Three times the building was enlarged ; new arcades were added to the south and to the east ; and in each spreading line the columns were overlaid with gold and lapis-lazuli. And in this way the Mosque, as no other building in Andalusia has ever been, became an actual record of the Moorish dominion.

Centuries have passed, and again the scene changes.

The great Khalifs were dead. But for a time, Almanzor, the unconquerable minister, saved Córdoba from the misrule of incompetence. What career has ever been more wonderful than that of this man, who began life as a professional letter-writer, and ended it as the sole ruler of an empire ! But in Spain romance is history. I cannot refrain from giving one incident in his life. Almanzor, victorious by the grace of God, wished to make an addition to the Great Mosque ; and for this purpose he coveted certain houses near by that were occupied by Christians. In person he went humbly to the owners to ask them to sell him their land ; each named a very high price ; but he gave double. And one poor woman demurred, for in her garden was a palm-tree that she loved. Then Almanzor engaged to obtain a house for her elsewhere with a garden and palm-tree precisely the same. "This will I do," he pronounced, "should it cost me a house of wealth." Faithfully he held to his word ;



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and we read that after wide search he found such a house, and purchased it at exorbitant cost. How much more beautiful life must have been when such things happened.

Almanzor died in 1002. He "was buried in hell," the Christian writers record. Then followed the deluge of disorder. Hishām III., deposed and helpless, was imprisoned in the great vault of the Mosque; and the curtain falls upon the last scene of the once great Omeyyads.

It is not necessary to write much more. Córdoba's history from this time is a monotonous record of revolt and broken peace. Khalif after Khalif was set up. Arabs, Slavs, Moors, and Spaniards wrestled in strife for mastery; and plundering, massacres, and assassinations became common events. Once for four days Córdoba was turned into a shambles, as the Berber butchers plundered the city, ransacking and burning palace after palace. Az-Zahrâ, the jewel of the Great Khalif, with all its exquisite treasures of art, was left a heap of charred ruins. There was a lull, when Yūsuf, the strong Berber ruler, founded the dynasty of the Almoravids. But the peace was fleeting as a dream.

One scene remains, and the drama closes.

After four and a half centuries of charming Moorish civilisation, the Christians reconquered Córdoba. Each nation has its period of power, then follows, it would seem, decline. No longer could the Moors support their full life; the sap was dried within, and over-ripe fruit must fall. Indifferent, as the East always is, to pain as to joy, they accepted defeat as they had accepted all else. "La Allah illah Allah!" (There is no God but Allah). It was destiny.

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Monks and priests took possession of the Mosque, and, in a solemn service, the building was consecrated to the Virgén de la Asunción. First pagan temple, then Christian church, afterwards the Great Mosque of Islam, now again Christian Church of the Virgin—sanctuary after sanctuary built over and into one another. . . . Surely no single building in the world contains more of human history! Standing in the centre of its city, where all day long the people come in and out, still the pulse, as it were, of Córdoba's life, with all its gracious beauty of form and light and colour, it is the one satisfying record left of the Khalif's city.

## V

The interior of the Mosque is certainly the most surprising and, in its way, the most beautiful interior in Moorish Spain. Nothing that the Moors have left is more perfect than this church of the Divine Wisdom, and I know of no other work of their art so complete. It is one of those buildings that sum up the genius of a people, the experience of a race, and the teaching of a school.

You pass through the heavy curtain which guards the Puerta de las Palmas from out of the colonnades of orange-trees into colonnades of stone. At once you are overwhelmed, fascinated, and amazed. Here is a beauty so new, so strange in its appeal, that you feel transported suddenly into another world. Before you, around you, everywhere, is a forest of columns—the simile used so often arises unsought. And in truth, the architecture of the Mosque is like a living thing. The

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canopy of flowing curves above you formed by the double rows of crossed, fantastic arches is like the interlaced branches of great trees ; and how vividly it brings back those enchanted forests one dreamed of as a child. The light, entering from above, playing through the arches, is softly filtered and diffused : the red stones where it strikes them glisten in one direction like flames ; in another, like the dull gleam of a dying fire. Soft lights are projected upon the porphyry, jasper, and marbles, fretting the thousand columns with moving patterns ; they catch the glass mosaics in jewelled brilliance, and make a faint shining upon the marble pavement, in which, as you look up and down, you see the long arcades reflected until the distance dies away mysterious and apparently unending.

But how is it possible to give in words any idea of this wonderful temple ? It is no description of the building to say that its ground plan forms a rectangle 570 ft. in length, and 425 ft. in width, thus covering, with its outer court, an area almost equal to that of St. Peter's in Rome ; or to give the number of its columns — formerly 1417, but now, owing to the mutilations of the Christians, only 850 ; or to state that nineteen is the number of the arcades from east to west, and thirty-five from north to south : nor is there any very vivid descriptive enlightenment in the statement that the beautiful different-coloured columns are only 13 ft. in height, and that the intervening space between them and the vaulted ceiling is filled with a double row of arches, alternately decorated red and white. We may accumulate facts, and note that the shafts of these columns are generally smooth, and rise directly from the ground without a base ; that they

are crowned by capitals, all different, of Byzantine and Saracenic workmanship with a few late Roman and Visigothic examples; or, again, that the lower tiers of the arches are round-headed and spring directly from these capitals, while the upper row, horse-shoe in form, are supported on high pillar-like imposts placed on the top of the columns.

These guide-book details may be necessary, possibly they are interesting, but they will never help you to realise the Mosque. You must wander about for a long time; you must stand in one place, then in another—best of all, I think, is the extreme south of the building in the Segunda Ampliacion of Al-Hakím II., near to the beautiful Mihráb. Here the Christian Coro is least visible, and here you see best the exquisite loveliness of the mosaics. Be content to leave your red-backed books in your pockets; a building can only give its secrets to those who approach it as a friend, and you do not make friends by careful inquiries. You must lose yourself in wonder, then slowly you will know the glad perfection of the place. There is nothing of the mystic suggestion of the Gothic cathedrals—that of Seville, for instance; this Moorish house of prayer brings you a sense of joy, not awe, it frees your spirit, it does not overwhelm; but soon you will come to feel singularly, joyously at home in its strange, interweaving masonry.

Then you will be ready to visit the Mihráb. It is entered by a vestibule, of which the pine-shaped roof is a wonder of exquisite grace, while the walls, richly mosaicked, glow like precious stones—gold, ruby, sapphire, and emerald. Set in such a frame, itself so fantastic and so beautiful, it is the final

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exquisite surprise that the Mosque will bring you. An archway, with marble columns in pairs of blue and green, gives entrance to the chamber ; and again the gold letters of the Arabic inscriptions form a lovely pattern on the deep blue of the background. Your feet are on a pavement of purest marble, in which the markings are the history of the pilgrims who have made the sevenfold circuit of the holy *Kilba* on their knees ; around you are seven walls of white marble, richly carved, and above you is a dome of marble, cut from a single block in the form of a great shell. The light is always softly brilliant here ; and the encircling marbles, as they catch the warm glow, seem to take the changing hues of an opal : sometimes they shine like a gigantic agate, in certain reflections they flush to fire, in others they whiten to snow.

Here is the message of a race who understood the fulness and the joy of life ; and knew how to take all beautiful things and compose them into new harmonies of their own. And you picture the glory of the Mosque before the Christians, over-zealous for the needs of their worship, made those incongruous additions, which flaunt themselves with such florid insistence. Imagine when the pavement was overlaid with silver, or with brilliantly coloured tiles, such as may still be seen in the *Alcázar* at Seville and the *Alhambra* of Granada. Then the ceiling of larchwood, fashioned like the faceted surface of an elaborately cut gem, flashed with gold and scarlet. There were 280 chandeliers of gold and brass and silver, transforming night into day ; and more than seven thousand lamps—cast from the bells of the Church of *Santiago*—illuminated the roof. “ There thou wilt see the gold

in profusion glitter as brightly as the lightning crossing the sky," wrote the Arab poet, Mahammed Al-bálum. The columns of marble are still beautiful; tradition says that they came from Carthage, from the Christian churches of Spain, and from the pagan temples in France; once they were ornamented with gold. Plates of solid brass covered the twenty-one massive entrance-doors; while the door of the Maksûra, where the Khalif worshipped with his court, as well as the walls of the earliest Mihrâb, were of gold. The pulpit, whereon was kept the splendid Koran of the Khalif Omar, was of ivory and rare woods, constructed in 3000 panels, encrusted with mother-of-pearl and many gems, and fastened with nails of gold. We read that it took seven years to fashion. But the imagination wearies as it dwells upon such wonders, and for a moment you are not sorry that some of it has been swept away—what is left is so quiet and so satisfying.

And in the very midst of all this loveliness the Christians have built the great Renaissance choir. In vain did the Ayuntamiento, the town council of Córdoba, threaten with death all who should take part in the work—one likes to remember that once town councillors could act like this—the Chapter, very resolute, gained a royal warrant from Charles V.; columns were pulled down, the larchwood ceiling was destroyed, and the Christian church was built, very Spanish in its large proportions and wealth of ornament. Hernan Ruiz was the architect; he did the work well, and the building is—let it be acknowledged frankly—a masterpiece of plateresque architecture. But here it is a distortion that one tries to forget; and when one

comes upon it suddenly, towering up, with such insistent largeness, amidst those slender columns, it jars one's æsthetic sense as a blotch of paint would on the face of a delicate beauty. Even the Emperor repented of his work. "Why was I not told of the wonder of the building," he remarked, when later he came to Córdoba and saw what had been built. Then he turned to the Church dignitaries who were showing him the structure, and told them, with fine scorn, "You have built what you or any others could have erected anywhere, but you have destroyed something that was unique in the whole world." And yet, in that very same year he began to build his great incongruous palace in the heart of the Alhambra. It would seem that it is more difficult for kings even than for others to understand their own mistakes.

Besides the Renaissance choir there are forty-four Christian lateral chapels in the Mosque, and to make room for these how much has been destroyed! The first Mihráb has entirely disappeared; of the second only a few relics remain, in the Capilla de Nuestra Señora de Villaviciosa. The lovely balustrade, inlaid with mother-of-pearl and tortoiseshell, which surrounded the Maksúra, has been burnt as firewood. Christian sculptures have been added to the Moorish ornament, often without any thought of harmony. And the few Christian treasures, such, for instance, as the beautiful little statue of St. Theresa by Alonso Cano, and "La Cena," the interesting picture of Pablo de Céspedes, seem quite out of place. Outside it is the same; the minaret has been replaced by a modern bell-tower; its gold and silver apples are destroyed; many entrances, both in the outer wall and in the

Court of Oranges, have been walled up, and the wonders of their mosaics and stuccos have been smeared with whitewash.

And yet, in spite of all this change, the Mosque has, in one sense, lost very little. All the beautiful things that have been taken away, all the misplaced alterations, all the lost glory of ornament have, after all, done very little to change the genius of its structure. Even the Christian additions become less discordant when one grows accustomed to them and ceases to think of them. And so much has been left. Still one finds in this joyous building the beauty that satisfies, the beauty the Moors knew so well how to express in their homes of prayer.

## VI

It has often been said that apart from its Mosque Córdoba is not now an interesting city. Gautier speaks of it as "le squelette blanché et calciné."

And indeed it is not easy to catch the real expression of Córdoba; the place is very lonely, over-wearied with its past. Everywhere, wandering about in the silent, tortuous streets, in the churches and the museum, these same haunting recollections meet you; and the city suffers from the memory of a greatness it cannot now support.

But, I think, could one forget this shadowing glory of its history one would find almost perfect satisfaction in the white city's sleeping peace. For Córdoba is always picturesque; hardly a street or a house that does not, as a painter would say, "compose."



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Nowhere is there any trace of that flaunting, monstrous newness—great hotels, shops tricked out for strangers, clamorous guides—wherewith so many cities cover old age. Córdoba is never vulgar, prosperous, or ugly. It is content to sleep on, making no effort to awaken ; for here the Eastern spirit of acceptance echoes with an unsilenced voice.

It is all so quiet, so sad and ruined, and yet it is all so lovely and living with colour. Every day you will find a new aspect of its beauty ; its delicate complexion is always changing, according to the weather and the hour. And for those who care for exquisite shadings of colour, as the sunlight quivers over the Sierra, and flings its golden reflections in gladness upon the white houses, into the green *patios*, and on the tiled roofs, of every variety of fair shades from cinnamon and brown to yellow, and even soft green ; to stay in Córdoba is to live from dawn to sunset in a wealth of beauty.

But if you delight in sight-seeing, and like to hurry, guide-book in hand, to visit palaces, churches, museums, then do not linger in Córdoba. The Museo Provincial is hardly worth a visit, unless, indeed, you love pictures, and care nothing for dirt and delapidation. Several pictures by Castello are here ; there are also some drawings and unimportant paintings by Zurbarán, Ribera, and Céspedes. Besides, there are a few Roman antiquities and many fragments of Moorish work, always beautiful.

Few of the Christian churches are important. Probably the finest is San Jacinto, in the Calle de Torrijos, where there is a good Gothic portal. El Carmen, in the north of the city, has an altar-piece by Juan de Valdés Leal, the earliest and the best of

his pictures, much finer than his better known work at Seville. Another of his pictures may be seen in the Colegiata de San Hipólito, in the Paseo del Gran Capitan; within this church are the tombs of Alfonso XI., of Ferdinand IV., and of the historian Ambrosio de Morales.

Everywhere it is the same; little is left in Córdoba to recall its former greatness. There is the Capilla de San Bartolomé, in the quiet court of the Hospital de Agudos, standing away from the white-silence of the Calle de Almanzor Romero; once it was the mosala of the great minister, and still it is beautiful, with its mosaics, unspoilt by decay or restoration. No other Moorish building here is as perfect as this. The old Alcázar is in ruins; a few towers, a water conduit, and a bath, that is all; and the Alcázar Nuevo, built by Alfonso XI., is now a prison. San Nicolás is the only minaret that has been spared out of seven hundred. There are a few ruins; the old baths in the Calle de Céspedes, for example; here and there is a Moorish door, an arch, a few beautiful tiles, an Arabic inscription, hidden away in unexpected places. And yet there is no outward sign of decay anywhere in these low whitewashed houses, all so much alike, built in the Moorish fashion around a *patio*, always bright with flowers, which gleam so gladly through the open iron-work of the great gates. One feels that the people must be charming who live in such houses.

By the Great River the centuries seem to have passed silently. Here the rambling Moorish bridge, battered a little, and very beautiful, still spans the swirling yellow water, with its sixteen arches, joining Córdoba with its southern suburb Campo de la Verdad,

the home of the gipsies. Then a little further eastwards,



near to the Paseo de Ribera, where the Córdoba  
linger when the day's work is ended, are the Moorish

mills, that have been working for a thousand years. This is the place in Córdoba that I like best ; nowhere else do you find more easily the spirit of this peaceful old city.

I was standing on the bridge, one afternoon, near to the Calahorra gateway, looking down into the water, very yellow, on which a small boat was making a difficult passage. There had been heavy rains in the early spring, a few weeks back, and the river flowed riotously through the fertile plain, broad and turbid. The wind blew slightly, fretting the surface into little waves, like the sea ; each one caught the sunlight and was gold-edged. A long line of grey mules, their braided, betasselled saddle-bags giving notes of beautiful Spanish colour, passed over the bridge, coming from the road that leads to Seville. The drivers greeted me gravely. "Dios guarde à usted." Opposite, inside the Puerta del Puente, they waited in a huddled patient group, for the examination of the *consumos*; then they moved onwards very slowly ; there is no hurrying in Córdoba. Presently two women came by, in the opposite direction, carrying baskets, which were examined carefully with the *consumos*' long steel prong before they might pass. They, too, moved without haste, with a steady, ample stride, walking beautifully, as do all Spanish women. A little way up the stream, near to the Moorish mills, a fisherman was standing upon a small island where the sedges made a green fringe to the yellow land. For a long time I watched him ; I did not see him catch anything, but he worked on patiently with his great net. To stand here is to have wandered out of time—and what rest that means ! In the sunlight the city,

stretched along the water's edge, looked white and peaceful, like a beautiful sleeping woman; and the Sierra, in the distance, was as a covering of soft blue gauze that had been cast aside. The minutes fell slowly. The mere sight of it all was joy, and I felt that if I lingered by those dreaming waters I should learn the peace of Córdoba.

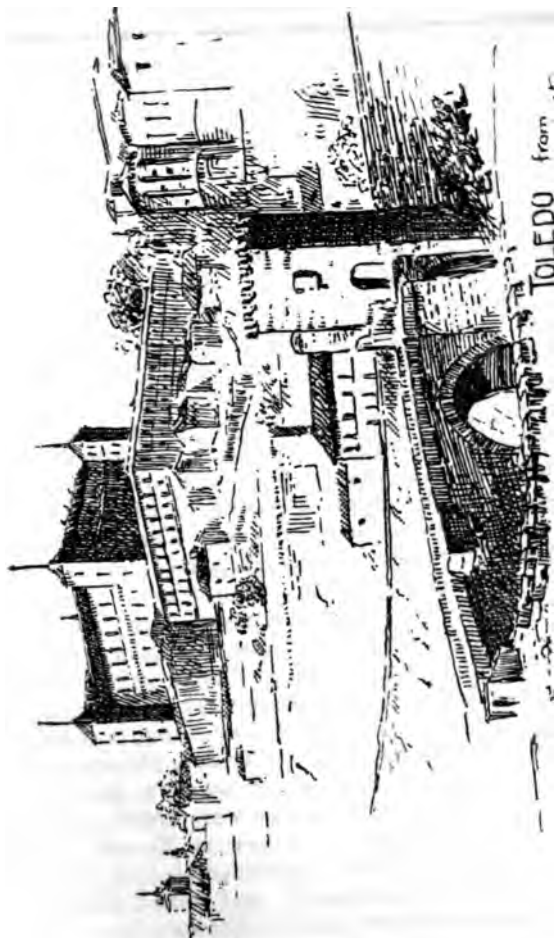
# TOLEDO

" Toledo epitomises the whole strange history of Spain in a manner so vivid that he who visits its old nooks and corners carefully and thoughtfully, can work out, almost unassisted, the strange variety which that history affords."—G. E. STREET.

## I

**C**ERTAIN cities, like certain people, always seem to be at one with their environment. The landscape around them corresponds so perfectly with their character that the setting, as it were, repeats and emphasises all that it encircles. Such a city is Toledo.

Think of the place ; gaunt, yet flushed with colour, a great yellow town encamped upon yellow, cloven rocks, flanked by the brown water of the Tajo as it sweeps sullenly in a great half-circle around its feet. Toledo repeats the strength, the ardour, the sadness, and the ruggedness of the sun-dried sierra, from which it rises as a rock starting from the sea. Surely no other city has been built amidst a landscape in such strong agreement with its spirit. The very houses take a rocky and precipitous air, standing in sharp upward lines, almost without the softness of a curve ; beautiful only by the magic of their strength. And it is by this withdrawn savagery of aspect that they



TOLEDO from the west

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belong with such spectacular appropriateness to their surroundings. They speak of the history and temper of the city whose spirit is cold and keen, nay, perhaps even cruel, as the sword-blades it fashions. Toledo ! Does not the very name seem to ring with a sound of steel ?

The real entrance to Toledo is the Puente de Alcántara, the old fortified bridge, which still clasps its gaunt arms, one large, one small, from bank to bank, across the water of the Tajo. There is a certain cold savagery in its aspect, far different from the still beauty of the great straggling bridge at Córdoba. A suggestion of strenuousness seems to linger around its towers, and even in the arched entrance that has replaced the old Moorish gateway ; and you wonder instinctively what strange things the rough yellow stones have seen. Built in the thirteenth century by Alfonso the Learned and Archbishop Tenório, on the foundations of a Moorish bridge, which, in its turn, was constructed on Roman foundations, it records much of the city's changing history. Its vicissitudes have been many, and often it has undergone additions and repairs. For the most part these are noted by inscriptions placed in the stone-work ; such as that which tells of a great deluge of water that lasted from the month of August until Thursday, December 20, in the year 1258, and carried away a great part of the bridge. Afterwards this was rebuilt by Alef, son of Mohamed Alameri, Mayor of Toledo, in the time of Almanzor, the unconquerable. There are many of these strange records, and indeed the bridge justifies the statement of the historian Ponz, that Toledo is the city of inscriptions. On one of the



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inner vaults are the sculptured arms of the Catholic sovereigns, and near by is a small statue of San Ildefonso receiving the chasuble from the Virgin—the legend so connected with Toledo's history. It is by Alonso Berruguete, the city's greatest sculptor. But you forget all these things as you wait upon the bridge to gaze out towards Toledo.

Toledo is most wonderful at sunrise, and sunrise there should be seen from the castellated bridge, as I saw it on the day I came first to the city. The morning had dawned, a great wash of lemon colour, barred with crimson and a tint almost brown, hard and clear as enamel. In the silence I heard the river as it splashed its unceasing rhythm; its tawny water now was palest blue like a silvered mirror. And beyond this encircling belt stretched the sierra, mysterious, reflecting the warm strong colour as it rolled like a savage sea towards the western orange glow. Only northwards, where a narrow isthmus connects the land with the great plain of Castile, did the landscape soften to a beautiful monotony of trees and grassy spaces. But here and there, sheltered in the rocks, were groups of scattered olives, forming a fringe of soft shadow as the morning touched their grey leaves to silver.

Amid this ardent scene Toledo stood aglow, heaped on its rocky throne; its rugged silhouette straight cut against the sky. And the great silent mass, placed there above the water and the plain, repeated the same strong notes of colour. The wonder grew, lifting all the distance into hard relief; and the extending glow set the sky ablaze; it stretched above Toledo like a vast awning of beaten copper. Minute after minute the

colours burnt with unslackening ardency ; catching the great bulk of the Alcázar, playing upon the pale outlines of the rising towers, touching the furthest roofs and windows with fire, until all the edges and surfaces of the huddled buildings seemed to flame in a crude illumination.

I know of nothing that can give a more poignant emotion than this first sight of Toledo. Never had I seen anything in the least resembling it, and the accounts I had read of the city prepared me not at all for that first overwhelming impression.

It is well that the train leaves you outside the city. The contrast from all you have left is too sudden, especially if you come, as I did, from Madrid, blatant, noisy and modern. How much you cast behind as you wind slowly upwards, listening to the dull jangle of the straining mules. Some fresh view of Toledo comes with each sharp turn of the zigzagging road ; then you pass under the Puerta del Sol, the magnificent Moorish gate, into the heart of the city. And, of a sudden, you feel transplanted back into another world. Toledo has sat aside, waiting, indifferent and proud, almost contemptuous perhaps, in its repose, while elsewhere life has rushed onwards. And again the inexplicable attraction of the East seizes you ; and the grip is harder than in sunny Córdoba.

## II

Walking in the streets of Toledo, your first impression is of something extraordinarily austere ; you seem

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to have passed into silence, and an almost painful emptiness of life.

Everywhere the Moorish design is evident ; those wise people, who understood that art is a help, not a hindrance, to life, laid out the streets in a tortuous network of cobbled alleys, as was most convenient in a city built upon rock, scorched by sun in summer, and in winter swept with icy winds. And the streets have remained as the Moors left them. The tall houses, rising in sharp upward and downward lines, like an arrangement of flat walls, are blind ; almost all are windowless on the side next to the street. They are all planned on much the same pattern, built around a small inner court—the enchanting *patio*—as the Moors built them ; each has its own *buzón*, and is fronted with a *zaguán* or vestibule of wood. Where there is a window, it is still barred and latticed, as of old ; the high gates, often studded with iron bosses, seem to forbid an entrance. No one appears to go in or out through these doors ; not a glimmer of the tree-shaded courts is seen. Here, these gardens of colour and rest are never open to the view of outside passers-by, as they are at Seville and Córdoba. The lives of the Toledans are lived secretly within these great yellow-visaged walls ; possibly dark eyes flash behind the gratings and red lips break into smiles, but not a sound penetrates through. Every house has the aspect of a prison ; they all look as if they had histories. Their extraordinary air of defence, added to a kind of contempt for any kind of decoration, does not seem at one with their present fate. They were not built with such thickness of wall and strength of entrance, such solidity of frontage and absence of windows,

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simply to afford comfortable residence. They have a proud, aloof expression—even when fallen into decay—of having outlived their original use.

In some streets, of course, such as the Calle del Comercio, there are shops, but the wares are simple, having the same old-world air ; only specially interesting is that of Alvarez, the best maker of Damascene. Now and then in some street you may chance to meet a water-carrier, or a woman following a mule laden with bright-coloured fruit and vegetables. Yet, more often, the streets seem deserted. Even in the Zocodover, the heart of Toledo's life, all is sedate. Here, too, you have the same feeling that haunts you everywhere ; a feeling not easy to analyse, coming, I think, from a consciousness of the separateness of all around you from the present and the probable future of the city. Only the children in Toledo, who clamour around you with their strange, incessant cry, " Un cankie sou ! Un cankie sou ! " remind you of the life and manners of to-day.

And all this mingling of proud, ruined magnificence with sleepy life, how expressive it is of Spain. In no other place, perhaps, do the streets make quite the same appeal to one, nor suggest quite so intimately the actual history of their city.

Everywhere in Toledo you find this suggestion of all manner of vivid antique things ; and indeed more than half the charm here lies in what you divine rather than in what you know. And reading the fascinating romances that record the city's early history, so many in number, each equally unfounded, you realise much of the proud spirit that from the first has animated its life. One writer connects the town with Tubal, the

grandson of Noah ; another states that, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, the Jews came here and built a town, which they called Toledo. And it hardly seems inappropriate to find tradition fixing the foundation of the city in the days of Adam ; recording that when God made the sun He placed it over Toledo, and settled our common parent there as the first king.

Imagine the city a Roman colony, described for us by Lozano, in his "Reyes Nuevos de Toledo." The old author tells of mighty buildings that were the wonder of Carpetania ; he records the legend of Roderic the Goth, and describes in glowing words the great Cave of Hercules, three leagues in extent, with its hoards of treasures, marble walls, and thousands of columns and arches, wherein the King penetrated before the fateful battle of Guadalete.

How much more interesting all this is than the fact that in the year B.C. 191 Marcus Fulvius Nobilior, directing the Roman forces, took the city from Helermo, the Celtiberian king ; and how much more it seems to tell us really of Toledo than Livy's brier description, "*parva urbs, sed loco munita*," or the statement of Pliny that the city was the metropolis of Carpetania.

Romance seems necessary in Toledo. What matters though hardly a stone of these wondrous buildings remains—faint traces of an amphitheatre in the suburb of Covachuelas, here and there an inscription, a ruined wall, and a portion of the Puente de Alcántara : that is all. But in Lozano's vivid imagination we gain yet another impression of the pride that has been the genius of the city.

And this rare intermingling of legend with truth

gathers around the Gothic kings. What royal figure could be more picturesque than that of Wamba, who began life as a peasant—if we may accept the assertion of Lope de Vega—rose to be the greatest of the Gothic sovereigns, and ended his days in claustral solitudes? His statue—now, alas! noseless—still greets you as you enter Toledo. His virtue; his skill in architecture, to which his walls and other buildings yet bear witness; the military genius with which he subdued his enemies in Narbonnese Gaul and elsewhere; his generosity, causing him to free his prisoners and send them away with splendid gifts; his delight in the arts, in learning, and his epistolary flowers of speech—all these things make him a king of almost fabulous merit. It is a relief to learn that he publicly kicked his personal enemy Count Paul, and caused him to walk before him, shaven, bare-footed, and crowned with laurels. Added to his other virtues Wamba seems to have enjoyed humour.

From the legendary death of the famous Roderic to the last scene, when, by stratagem and betrayal, Alfonso the Christian re-took Tolieth for Spain, the history of the city reads far more like a romance than the sober record of facts; it is rich with every kind of passionate incident, it has all the sharp contrasts and strange vicissitudes of Oriental history. And the colours of life that had already marked Toledo grew more vivid now that they were touched with the intoxicating glamour of the East.

It is not possible, nor is it necessary, to follow year by year the history of the city through these centuries of broken peace and continuous, futile revolt. To-day it matters little that the Toledans rebelled after

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the first surprise of Tarik's conquest had passed ; and strove, not once, but many times, against the Moorish rule ; their spirit unbroken even by the "Fatal day of the Foss," that darkest hour of history whose shadow hovers in the sadness of the city ; so that still the Spanish proverb speaks of *una noche Toledana*. Let it be said that this act of treachery was done by Amron of Huesca, a renegade Christian, the deputy ruler of the city, and not by the will of Abd-er-Rahmān.

How many scenes and how many figures once famous in Toledo's history time has dimmed ! Forgotten is Blanche, widow of Roderic, whose proud spirit seems a reflection of the city of which she was queen ; compelled to marry the son of Musa, she insisted, as a condition of her compliance, that the whole Moorish Court should humble themselves to kneel before her. Forgotten is Hacim, "El Durrete," the striker of blows, although he became the uncrowned king of the city. Forgotten, too, is Eulogius, the fanatic who, fired with love for the martyred Flora, coveted death, and hastened from Córdoba to arouse the Christians of Toledo. Even the second conquest of the stormy, rock-guarded city, by the Great Khalif Abd-er-Rahmān III., with all its picturesque details—a siege that lasted for eight years, and necessitated a second city being built to watch the city that refused to yield—is forgotten. All these things—and many more occasions as great as these—have gone. But what matters now is that, in spite of all efforts of rejection, Toledo was unable to keep the wonderful civilisation of the Moors from soaking into its life. And everywhere to-day, in churches that once were mosques, in palaces, such as the Casa de Mesa and the Taller

del Moro; in houses, austere without and beautiful within; in memories of gardens that of old were the perfection of rest; in bridge and arch; in exquisite harmonies of ornament that still are beautiful; and more than all, perhaps, in the tragic immobility of the city's spirit—the transient passage of that great people is indelibly marked.

### III

Your first impression, when you walk around the Cathedral of Toledo, leaving you no power to note its flying buttresses, the beautiful carving of its finials, its impressive doorways, or any other of its superb details, is of a great stone vision that closes up the street. Like most Spanish cathedrals, it rises straight up from amongst the encircling buildings. The Plaza Mayor, the little square lying between the Claustro and the Calle de la Triperia, is deplorably narrow; almost equally small is the Plazuela del Ayuntamiento, which fronts the west façade; and the space here is blocked besides with the fine classic building of the Ayuntamiento and the Palaico Arzobispal. And yet, as you stand back against the opposite houses in an attempt to survey the Cathedral, this very nearness gives you a great impression of its height; it seems to arise above the clustering masonry, and to make the yellow-toned masses a mere pedestal for its beauty.

You gaze upon the fine upward reach of the great west front; the soft, mellow tones of its granite surface; the three statue-guarded doors, with their closely packed figures of admirable Renaissance work, that



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break its serene expanse; then, above the treble portals, you see more sculptured figures, and in the centre a fine bas-relief of San Ildefonso and the Virgin; and above again, the splendid rose-window of vast circumference, with the glazed arcade beneath; and you note that the whole is flanked by the two towers, the one to the south, unfinished, crowned with its low cupola, the other, the great northern one, springing upwards, a tapering pinnacle of sculptured stone—all these things crowd upon the senses with a rush that for a moment seems to make the act of vision the whole of life.

The building, as it now stands—there was a mosque here once, and before that a still earlier Christian church—was begun in the dawn of the thirteenth century; and the work continued for more than two hundred and sixty years. This accounts for the varied moods of its architecture. Early Gothic in its general plan, many late Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque features occur, while added to these are the never-wanting touches of Moorish work. It is well to compare the stiff, studied attitudes of the early sculptures—such, for example, as those which decorate the Puerta del Niño Perdido—with the finished Renaissance work of the Puerta de los Leones, the entrance which, after the west façade, is the pride of the exterior, with its deep frame-work of sculptured images, covered with a riot of delicate ornament, more than I have time to write about.

The interior of the Cathedral corresponds in vastness and impressive grandeur with the outside; and more than this, it greatly exceeds it in sumptuous beauty. It is the perfection of Gothic in Spain. And yet I

despair of being able to describe this great architectural drama ; for drama it may be called—it is so richly figured, so animated with incident. Its appeal is so emphatic, it is apt to leave one bedazed ; a little wearied with all this insistent architectural rhetoric, as if the church would remind you always that here, at any rate, in Toledo Christian art had triumphed.

The whole decoration is in proportion to this sumptuous, arrogant Spanish spirit ; everywhere there is so much wealth, such accumulation of treasures. How many lovely and interesting things are hidden away in the side-chapels ? Such are the “Expolio de Jesus,” by El Greco, and Goya’s “Betrayal of Christ” in the Sacristía ; or the frescoes, by Juan de Borgoña, in the fine Sala Capitular, very beautiful, with its Renaissance doors and exquisite *artesano* ceiling of mingling colours, red and blue and gold ; or again the simple Gothic pictures of Juan Alfon, over the altar of the Capilla de los Reyes. Then there are many sumptuous—this adjective, so dear to the Spanish writers, arises unbidden when you think of the Cathedral—tombs ; those, for instance, of Don Alvara de Luini and his wife in the Capilla de Santiago, better known as the Constable’s Chapel ; or that of Cardinal Mendóza, a fine sarcophagus with recumbent figures ; or those of Henry II. and III., with their wives Doña Juana and Doña Catolina, in the fine Renaissance Capilla de los Reyes Nuevos ; and many others.

Soon you will come to the choir, which, with its finely sculptured screen, guarded by the railed entrance, whose hidden silver still gleams through its iron coating, is the most beautiful, as well as the most famous, part of this opulent church. Its multiplied

treasures would need a volume to enumerate them. Here is the great archiepiscopal throne, with columns of red jasper crowned with capitals of snowy marble, and the vaults of each arch gleaming with gold ; here, too, are the lovely reading-desks, the work of Arnoa de Vergara, his two sons, and Vicente Salinas. And who has not heard of the Sillería, the famous choir-stalls, of which one half were wrought by Alonso Berruguete, who was the pupil and, to some extent, the imitator of Michelangelo ; and the other by the more delicate craftsman Philip of Borgoña. The carvings in the Sillería Baja depict scenes in the conquest of Granada ; and you will be astonished at the exuberance of the artist's fancy ; grotesque incidents and animals appearing always in unexpected places. In the upper stalls the scenes are scriptural ; each is separated by columns of jasper, with bases and capitals of alabaster ; and here the workmanship is more delicate, and perhaps more beautiful. Such an opulence of carving ; every surface is covered with ornament. But examining each detail with laborious effort will not help you at all to realise the beauty as a whole ; and I was glad of the dim light that softened all this florid display into harmony.

More bewildering almost is the gorgeous Capilla Mayor ; typically Spanish in its wealth of ornament ; again, not an inch of space without carvings—ornate and exuberant, like the Spanish imagination. Flamboyant saints are framed in pillars of blue and gold, which are overladen with designs of fruit and foliage, and fantastic creations of every kind ; pulpits gleam with gilt ; the Custodia shines like a jewel from above the great Retablo ; the covered silver of the Reja

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flashes in places under its colossal Crucifix. And here is the famous barbaric Transparente, a note of insistent ugliness. The light shines full, catching the blue and gilt of columns and groyning, and the red and white mosaic of the pavement in crude reflections. You can forget nothing.

Do not trouble to learn the names of the many artists who have wrought these works; it matters so little whether they are forgotten—so much whether their work is beautiful. And more than this: do not think that the hours are fleeting, and that you will have no time to visit the church treasure—each one of incredible value. Seven canons open the seven doors, with seven separate keys. The wardrobe of the Virgin del Segrario is guarded here; her mantle, embroidered with gold, and pearls, and many jewels, is of unimaginable splendour. Here, too, is the great silver Custodia, the work of Enrique de Arphe, and many other treasures to stare at in astonishment. More beautiful, and not less wonderful, are the church vestments, which are guarded in the Ochavo; the early Gothic embroideries are exquisite.

But leave all these things for a second visit, when you come armed with your guide-book, bent upon gaining information. For, after all, it is the general effect of the building which is Toledo's chief wonder. Be content to let this speak to you; wait, without impatience, until you find an escape from the monotony of this too great treasure. Stand between the great west entrance, the Puerta del Perdón, and the Mozárabe chapel: the spot where you realise best, I think, the grandeur of the immense nave, with the choir rising in the middle, as in all Spanish cathedrals.

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Afterwards give some time to the silent cloisters ; and, in their sunny restfulness, enjoy the uncostly pleasures of colour and quiet. Watch the deep-yellow light as it falls upon columned arch and green leafage. You will think of the generations who have wandered in and out here, on spring days, and of necessity you will begin to dream dreams. Then come back, and wait until, in the late afternoon light, the magnificent glass of those most gorgeous and most ancient windows begins to glow with purple and crimsons and orange, like a stormy sunset. The hot light passing through them seems to gain an indescribable radiancy ; it is projected upon the clustered shafts of the columns and falls upon the mosaicked pavement in vivid patches, of ruby, emerald, amethyst, and topaz ; it imparts an exquisite shade to the soft, warm, brown colour of the stone ; it makes the gloom above look richer, and throws that part of the beautiful vaulting which rests upon the great piers of the transept into a mysterious iridescent remoteness.

And now, imperceptibly, the magic of the place will seize you. Little by little, as you stand and gaze down the long sweep of the nave and the double aisles with their great supporting pillars from the entrance to the point where the slender jasper columns of the Coro lose themselves in the blue distances, you will become aware of the harmony, the colossal greatness sleeping in the building. No longer will it appear a repository of over-abundant ornament and wonder-exciting treasures, laboriously wrought and gathered from many sources, but a church with a soul of its own, almost animate, living its own mystical, proud, and solitary life.

## IV

Sometimes it is given to one man to typify his age ; having the interpretative genius, his works become, as it were, a mirror reflecting an entire people. Dominico Theotocópulo, better known as El Greco, expressed in this manner the whole spirit of Toledo. Even now he forms a part of your life while you are there. He is more or less everywhere around you ; he built churches—the classic façade of the Ayuntamiento was remodelled from his design—he carved statues, and he painted pictures ; there are at least fifty in the different churches of the city. And wherever you see him he is sure to be supreme ; I mean that you can look at nothing else when there is a canvas of his to be studied.

And as you gaze, all the strength of light and colour, all the fascinating strangeness of form, all the Toledan character, proud and aloof, and the Toledan history seem to appear before you. That is the perpetual interest of his work—you don't visit the churches and museum to look at his pictures as a change of amusement from the streets, you go because they reproduce the same atmosphere, and offer a vivid reproduction of all that surrounds you. El Greco was a painter, strong, individual, almost coldly relentless ; a nature, passionate, introspective, concerned with new phases of life, and possessed with a fine power of creative expression. Just as Toledo impresses you with its overmastering individuality, so here you find a painter who brought into art a new spirit, and, in some respects, a new form. And you know not

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whether to say that the painter reflects Toledo, or that the city has moulded his work.

One picture especially, that which is accounted his best work, "The Burial of Gonzalo Ruiz, Count of Orgaz," still in the church of Santo Tomé, where it was painted in 1584, gives—to me at least—the entire impression of that passionate, conscious individualism so characteristic, not only of Toledo, but of Spain.

There are some thirty figures in this gallery of living portraits; each personality is complete, yet each gains increased power from the contrasted presence of the others. Faces so Spanish, I find every shade of the national character in their magnificent life. In St. Augustine, splendid in ecclesiastical robes, is all the opulence of the Catholic Church; in the livid face of the dead Count, in the cowed monk and two priests, is the fervid piety of a people who have felt themselves always in mystical communion with God; in the young, warm beauty of St. Stephen and the lovely acolyte is the full joy and rich colour which the East has left in Spain; and lastly, in the long line of mourners who stand behind the group of the principal figures, and where the painter's own nervous face is the sixth portrait counting from the right side, you have the types unchanged in Castile to-day, each one so singularly individual; men of a dignity almost defiant in its self-absorption, yet not without humour; and all having that cold ardour—a very Spanish trait—which is the refinement of passion. In the nervous hands, given to every figure, you catch a hint of the irritable force that was the genius of El Greco.

Now look at the upper portion of the canvas; it is the customary mediæval representation of the Virgin and

Christ awaiting in the heavens the spirit of the dead saint. But how individual is the rendering. No scene of heavenly sweetness is depicted ; instead, the painter seems to revel in the absoluteness of his freedom. The dead soul is a tall, gaunt man ; the hovering angels are men with strong limbs and restless faces ; the thin, long Christ is a shadow, suggested more than revealed ; the Virgin is not the Catholic Mary. And yet I find dignity here, and a certain wild, tempestuous beauty—the rare beauty of effective design. Possibly the details are absurd—many writers have said so—but for me the inspiration of the painter triumphs, and the longer I gazed at this remarkable vision the more I was impelled.

No other pictures that I have known in Spain—with the exception of the works of Velazquez, who was the perfect harmony of which El Greco was the prelude—contain more of human life than this “Burial of Count Orgaz.” Then the actual painting is masterly. Many works of art are more exquisite, some may be more beautiful ; so often El Greco seems not to express beauty, but to disregard it. Yet the picture is one of the greatest pictures in Spain ; it is always interesting.

## V

To live in Toledo is to understand how deeply religion has been the natural passion of the people. You can scarcely walk for five minutes in any direction without coming upon some church ; they stand at the corner of almost every square ; many are embedded between the pale brown walls of the houses. They



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are the picture galleries and museums of Toledo, and it is around them that the history and the legends of the city centre.

And how interesting are all these picturesque, though never quite architecturally convincing, churches; their structures, for the most part, being a medley of Gothic, Moorish, and Renaissance work—as, for instance, that of San Juan de la Penitencia, where nave and choir are Moorish, the portal and windows Gothic, the *Rejas* plateresque, and several of the altars baroque: the church is known for its fine tomb of Francesco Ruiz, Bishop of Avila. And yet, perhaps, what gives to these old buildings precisely their distinctive interest is this simple, sometimes almost grotesque, intermingling of Moorish and Christian art. It is so Spanish; the outcome of that necessity for realism—one of the strongest of their traits.

Best of all I like El Cristo de la Luz, which stands near to the two Moorish gates, the Puerta del Sol and the Puerta Visagra Antigua, in the shadow, as it were, of the Moorish spirit, and which to-day remains a perfect mosque that carries one's memory back in gladness to Córdoba. Here is the joyous skill, beautiful and strange, which makes you conscious anew of that delight in colour and line—the gift of the people to whom religion was a part of life, and who, perhaps for this reason, built their houses of prayer in memory of their tents. The slender columns are a direct imitation, it is said, of the tent-poles; the intricate patterns, and gay, but always blending, colours of the decorations, reproduce the Oriental carpets; while the stalactite borders of the arches represent the fringe of those

woven hangings. The Moorish architect always obeyed his own laws ; that is why his work seems to have something to say.

But even in El Cristo de la Luz there are Christian additions, and the apse is a much later work. Christian legends have gathered around the building. The first Mass was celebrated here after the Christians conquered Toledo ; we read that the horse, some say of the Cid, some of the King, knelt down before the door, and refused to move onwards. Then a niche in the opposite wall was opened, and here a crucifix was displayed, with a lighted lamp beneath it, which had burned, so the Christians said, during the three hundred and seventy years in which the Moors had prayed to Allah. Hence the name of the church.

It pleased me to dream upon these things as I stood in the mosque, and watched the sunlight ruddle the red and green bricks of the window-arches with moving patterns.

But almost each church has its special appeal : its precious mosaics, its cloisters, its tombs, its beautiful carving, or its fine picture. Some churches, like Santa Fé, I like, not because they have any of these treasures, but for their suggestion of delicate memories. There is an old, wild garden beside the church, where you will see best all that is left of its apse, with the beautiful arches ; and you will muse of the years when the convent church was a Moorish palace. And there is Santo Domingo el Real, not beautiful in itself, but where each morning the white-robed Dominican nuns gather to pray, in a grated, western room. Then I go to other churches, San José and San Vicente, for instance, to see El Greco's pictures ; or to Santo

Domingo el Antiguo, the classic church, simple and beautiful, which the painter built when he came first to Toledo, about the year 1575, and in which he rests buried, the exact spot unknown ; and I like to remember that though the worker has been forgotten, all the beauty of his work is fresh ; or, again, I go to the Hospital San Juan Bautista, to see the last work of Berruguete, finished just before he died, in the close of the sixteenth century—the tomb of Cardinal Tavera, the founder of the hospital, very strong and very quiet. There is no other work of Berruguete's in Toledo more beautiful than this ; it seems as if his sometimes too exuberant fancy had here been held in restraint. Here, too, is the wonderful portrait of Cardinal Tavera, by El Greco ; and the famed St. John the Baptist—the picture which so many find ugly, while the few see in its strange conception a striving for personal utterance, and find many new things in its suggestion. This is the picture that more than any other has lent support to the fable of the painter's madness.

And there are so many other churches. It does not matter very much which one you choose to visit : from each you will carry away some lovely impression.

Near to the Moorish arch of the Zodocover there is the Hospital of Santa Cruz, once a Gothic, then a Moorish palace, and now, ingloriously, a school of infantry : with its wonders of chiselled stone ; the grand staircase within, robbed now of its wealth of ornament ; and the great forlorn *patio*, in which beautiful things lie about in decay, and all the magnificence seems sad with memory. There are the two ancient synagogues, now the Christian churches of Santa Maria la Blanca and El Tránsito, both filled

with mysterious, beautiful Moorish things, standing desolate, one building unused, in the brown emptiness of the abandoned Juderia. There is the church that was built before the conquest of Granada to be the burial-place of the Catholic kings—San Juan de los Reyes; on which, without, you see those famous chains, now rusty, of the Christians of Granada, incongruously decorating the granite walls; while inside you find a sumptuous riot of Renaissance ornament that left my sight bewildered and my thoughts unsatisfied. But here are the exquisite cloisters, exhaling peace like a subtle perfume, than which there is no spot more lovely even in Toledo. And here is the convent, with its two rooms, now the Museo Provincial, in which a few neglected treasures are stored. There are two magnificent portraits, and the well-known plan of Toledo, by El Greco; a Holy Family by Ribera, in which you see that strong painter in a gentle mood; a fine Christ of Morales; many pictures by Luis Tristan,\* the clever pupil of El Greco; and one beautiful work by Juan Escalante de Sevilla. Besides these pictures there is a bust of Juanelo Turriano, by Berruguete; many Arabic inscriptions and bits of old ornament; some lovely specimens of Moorish azulejos, and one broken slab, whose inscription shows it to be a fragment from King Wamba's tomb.

\* There is a very interesting picture of "The Trinity" in the Sacristía de los Cálices at Seville Cathedral which has just been discovered to be the work of Luis Tristan, his signature having been found on the canvas a few months since. This fact was not known when I wrote my "Record of Spanish Painting" last year. A reproduction of the picture is given there as the work of El Greco.

Then there are churches with Moorish towers :



San Roman, Santa Magdalena, Santo Tomé, San Pedro Martir, Santiago, San Miguel, and the ruined San Servando ; all very simple, and all beautiful.

These apt workmen never tried to do more than the money given them to spend would allow them to do well. And there are so many more interesting old buildings that I have no space to write about—such as San Clemente, with its fine façade, the work of Berruguete ; or Santa Isabel, interesting for its delicate azulejos and *artelado*, ceiling ; or San Andrés, with its exquisite little sculptured Mater Dolorosa, by an unknown artist ; or San Pedro Martír, where are the tombs of the poet Garcilaso de la Vega and the beautiful, unknown Malograda.

Outside Toledo, below the old walls, and quite near to the famous Bano de la Cava, there is El Cristo de la Vega, once the ancient basilica of Santa Leocádia, with its crowded memory of legends. The church is small and unfrequented ; standing apart from the city in the quiet of Vega. Very beautiful, as I have seen it, in the late afternoon ; its aisles in shadow, mostly, but with a broad shaft of sunlight at the entrance, illuminating distinctly the marble figure of the martyred Leocádia, in a peaceful attitude, very human, lying as if asleep ; while the great wonder-working Christ, with its famous detachable arm, was in the gloom above the high altar.

I was never tired of this old church, with its sharp contrasts of peace and desolation ; most beautiful of all at sunset. There are two small courts, one dark with cypresses, very silent, which guard its entrance. And from here you gaze across the green sweep of the Vega into the mystery of the evening. You scent the breath of the breeze as it carries the perfume from the orchards of the *cigarrales*, where the peaches grow as they grow nowhere else ; and you hear the perpetual

sighing of the restless Tajo as it forces its water through the narrow gorge, and beats upon the high arches of the great bridge. And then to walk slowly back to the Puerta del Cambón—such a view! High above you, beneath the dome of the glowing sky, you see Toledo; heaped roof against roof, tower against tower, in a flame of colour. And you understand how you have come to love so passionately the strong, proud city.





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clever beauty who has triumphed over age, it sparkles with the mere joy of life.

And yet my first feelings upon coming to the Andalusian capital were all disappointment. Unfortunately I had woven a gorgeous tapestry of illusions around the place, aroused by the superlative rhapsodies I had read of its beauties, and of course nothing I had dreamed was at all like what I found. I saw whitewash where I had expected brilliant mosaics; the movement of life where I had looked for the allurements of dreams. The Giralda Tower, with its exquisite, slender grace, seemed to me at first like a beautiful toy, just as it looks in Goya's wonderful picture in the Cathedral, where Santa Justa and Santa Rufina hold it in their hands; the Alcázar, with its bastard Moorish splendours, looked almost tawdry; the Court of Oranges was small and dreary, not at all like that at Córdoba; the mixed architecture and dingy colours of the outside of the Cathedral aroused in me no enthusiasm. Then the Golden Tower, around which my dreams had centred, disappointed me most of all; while the Guadalquivir—had not the very name been wont to conjure beauty?—reminded me, let me confess it at once, of a certain pea-soup I hated as a child. The women were not all beautiful, although they did wear roses in their hair; the men did not look in the least like *soreadors*; and you did not hear the bitter-sweet twang of the guitar as the sun tinted the sky at its setting. The truth was, I wasted the hours trying to understand Seville instead of enjoying it.

Then I came at the wrong time. It was the 19th of April, and the week of the Feria. I had hurried away from the Prado at Madrid to be in time for this

annual festival—another mistake; a city is like a person, it will not tell you its secrets in a crowd; and before you can make merry together you must know one another. I came back from the Prado de San Sebastian oppressed with bitter disappointment; and that night I went to bed disillusionised. The words of the Spanish proverb mingled mockingly with my dreams of the great fair, that had seemed to me so dull, so colourless:

“He who Seville has not seen  
Has not seen a marvel great.”

## II

It is only by living in Seville from week to week that you can learn to understand its charm; only in this way do you invite its exquisite joy to re-fashion your life. And the fear is that you will not stay long enough. Toledo seizes you and possesses you as a strong man possesses a woman; but the spirit of Seville is as delicate as the joy the place brings you—it must be wooed. Nor must you approach it as you did Córdoba; one city is a siren that allures you and afterwards withdraws, without feeling the passion it awakens; the other is a lover waiting to respond.

But Seville is not a city to be visited with a guide-book. You may thoughtfully plan out your days, as suggested by your red-backed mentor. *First day*: Ascend the Giralda Tower; see the Cathedral; walk through the Plaza de la Constitución, the Plaza de San Fernando, and the Calle de las Serpes. *Second day*: Visit the Alcázar, the Casa de Pilatos, and

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Hospital de la Caridad. *Third day:* In the morning see the Museum ; in the afternoon drive through the Paseo de Cristina, the Paseo de las Delicias, and the Parque Marie Luisa.

No, those three days of magnificent treadmill, in which you see everything and do everything, will not teach you to know Seville. In fact it is just when you have *done* all this—when you *have nothing left to go and see*, that you will begin to enjoy Seville. There is a reluctant touch of shyness about the place, provocative as a difficult woman. And another point: you must not hesitate too long; you must seize the joy that Seville offers you, with this quite feminine spirit, eagerly, with both hands, accepting it all gladly as youth accepts, and loves. Then you will find a contentment come over you, which will take away the restless desire for action, and still more the need for excitement. You will be happy without seeking to be so; and now your stay in Seville will be long full days of joyous courtship.

But I would say again, these joys will not come to you at once. You will learn them slowly from living, as I did, in the Plaza San Fernando, where you can see the people whenever you look out of your window, sitting all day long on the marble seats beneath the shade of the date-palms, warmed by the sun, quite happy doing nothing but smoking cigarettes; from spending long hours in the Cathedral, the Giralda Tower, the Alcázar, especially in its lovely gardens, and in many other buildings—not to see them, but to enjoy them; and still more from loafing both by day and night in the seven hundred streets, each one with its own character.

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At first this will not be easy ; your old habits will become impracticable, and you will have to form new ones that will appear unprofitable. You need to be happy to loaf successfully, that is why Northern people find it so difficult ; but everywhere around you you will have plenty of models ; not even the Venetians loaf as perfectly as the Sevillanos.

You must go day by day to sit outside a *café*, especially in the early evening at about seven o'clock, in the Sierpes, that narrow, animated street, which is so different from all other streets, with its double row of irregular, close-drawn windows that make a sinuous line of light—certainly it is like a serpent. Every one walks up and down its pavements ; and when you are there you seem to be watching a stage-play. You will see the Sevillano, the distinctive Andalusian, as you will see him nowhere else—in springtime there is sure to be a *matador* strolling about in faultless costume, and women, in *mantillas*, saunter to and fro, with their slow, graceful walk. They are not often beautiful, but each one looks as if she understood that she was a woman, and was very glad that this was so. Perhaps this is why they are all so attractive. Notice the way in which the men smoke their cigarettes, and how some of them drink their small glasses of *Agua ardiente* ; their enjoyment is so Spanish, so epicurean. And the women fan themselves in the same way. They are all happy in their frank acceptance of life as it is.

At night you must visit certain *cafés* in the Sierpes, where you will see the national dances ; strange dramas of love, Moorish in their origin. You must see them all danced many times, especially by the *Gitanas*, by young children, dancing each evening in one of the

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*café*s, and by the boys, who so often give performances in the streets ; then you will understand yet another characteristic of the people : their love of strong, quite elemental, sensations. Perhaps it is this that so often makes them seem cruel to us. And when it is all over, and you come out again into the Sierpes, you will find all the streets silent—for Seville, like all happy people, sleeps early.

But it is not only in the Calle de las Sierpes that you must watch the life of Seville. You must spend many hours in the Paseo de las Delicias—the name will tell you of the beauty of the place—where the ladies of Seville drive and promenade each afternoon. And, more important still, you must go to the little-visited Barrio de los Humeros, which stretches along the Guadalquivir in the other direction, northwards, from the Estacion de Córdoba. There, on each Sunday afternoon, you will see all the population of Triana and the Macarena ; a gay, drifting tide of men and women, passing up and down beneath the green tunnels of the trees ; the *cigarreras* in lovely shawls, their hair elaborately arranged, with a rose or carnation showing against its blackness ; *flamencas*, tall and heavy, with wonderful eyes, and strange sullen faces, quite unforgettable in their bright costumes ; men in more sombre garb ; and among them the *gentes flamencos*, dressed in very tight clothes and jauntily poised *sombreros* ; then there are shouting shoals or boys and little girls, very grown-up and very fascinating in their quaint, childish self-consciousness.

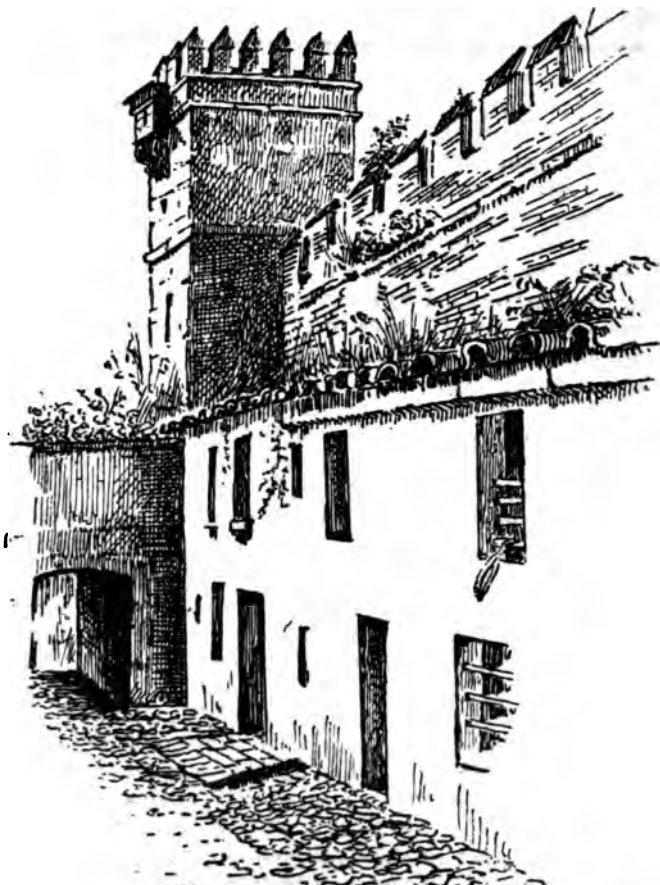
The crowd gathers most thickly around the *kiosks* of the *refresco* sellers ; some are sitting on the seats, others are stretched upon the ground beneath

the trees. There is a sound of castanets and clapping of hands, and, after a little persuasion, a couple stand up to dance. The cries of the *aguadores* and the vendors of shrimps and crabs' claws from Cadiz mingle with the sounds of the dancers. Here and there is a seller of lottery tickets. And here, too, every one seems joyous. But there is no riotous noise, only simple, good-natured content. It is not necessary for the Sevillians to shout and make a great deal of disturbance to convince themselves that they are happy.

### III

The two powers that stir life in Seville are religion and love, and the two are closely related. It is only a short distance, passing down one of the narrow streets, from the gaiety of the Sierpes into the Plaza del Trifuno, and, in a few short minutes, you seem to have passed from the West into the East.

Before you the Giralda leaps up, with an illusion of real motion, from the great square; the lacework of its white stone is sharp-cut against the sky, from which it catches, at different hours, the most exquisite changing hues. At its base crouches the Cathedral, its Christian successor, a vast, spreading mass of masonry. Arches one above another in endless irregularity; and between flying buttresses that are slender-pinnacled, something like the jets of a fountain; everywhere myriads of turrets and bosses; and above them the open-work parapets which crown the great roof; with the dome rising in the centre, and pinnacles surrounding it. Perhaps incongruous in many of its



The  
Tower of  
The Alcazar . Geville.



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details, dark in colour, marred by many alterations and rebuildings—and yet it is great in its spectacular effect. Sometimes it seems as if the whole building was just waiting to spring upwards to reach the pagan spirit soaring by its side.

Then opposite is the brown-visaged, battlemented outer wall of the Alcázar ; its low entrance-gate and square towers ; very Moorish—almost all that is left of the great original building—giving no sign of Pedro the Cruel's palace, with the exquisite gardens that are enclosed within. And at the west end of the Plaza stands the Lonja.

You forget that this building and the Cathedral are modern Renaissance work ; and that the Alcázar has been added to and altered out of its original Moorish likeness, by Charles V. and his successors. In Andalusia you grow accustomed to these sharp contrasts that meet you everywhere, and perhaps nowhere more so than in Seville. But here, this mingling of buildings that are so old with others so much younger seems in such harmony with the spirit of the city that you feel no surprise at the incongruity.

The sun beats down with an intense impression or quivering gold ; the Plaza is all white and a-glitter in the silent blaze ; a few figures in blue blouses lie asleep across the glaring pavement. It is a relief to enter through the Puerta de los Palos into the shadowed quiet of the Cathedral. At the doorway a beggar sits, and as you pass he asks for charity, in the Virgin's name. He seems quite pleased with your murmured answer, "Perdone, usted, por el amor de Dios" (Excuse me, brother, for the love of God).

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He does not move, nor does he even trouble to hold out his hand. It is warm in the sunshine, a shadow from the sculptured figures of the saints and angels which surround the portal falls over him pleasantly, and he has his cigarette. He is a man of Seville; someone will give some day: he, too, is content in his acceptance of life.

Seville is not a religious city like Toledo, and yet its Cathedral has far more deeply the religious sentiment. Here you have the charm of strength, and of great spaces, united more perfectly with the material charm of grandeur. Much that is sumptuous and most typically Spanish is here. The Coro, the Capilla Mayor, the Capilla Real, the Sacristía, the altars and the pulpits are all gorgeous with an exuberance of carving; the opulence of the Church treasures is amazing—each one is a marvel to gaze at. But here there is as well all that is most appealing and most subtle in the power of the Church. And always, looked at from within, in days of festival and in hours of silence, it is by its general effect of immense nave and great columns, so tall that they seem slender as a forest of trees, that Seville Cathedral impresses you. Not many of the details of its ornament will give you a separate sensation of pleasure. The few beautiful things—like the Christ on the Cross, by Montañes—are hidden in the dimness of the side-chapels, where they seem to take their share in the intense religious emotion of the place. And the many pictures, expressing as they do the strong, richly coloured feeling that has always characterised the religion of Spain, also become a part of the life of the building. This is why I like Murillo so much better here than anywhere else. Thus

the whole interior of Santa Maria de la Sede makes one appeal, not many ; and that is the triumph of its charm ; everything is merged in the one impression of great height and size. And it must be remembered that size, especially in buildings, often claims another adjective than "mere." The very lordliness of the scale keeps the over-rich Spanish decoration in restraint, so that instead of oppression you are conscious of an amplitude of rhythmical proportion.

It is a church for cool, dim stillness after the blaze and stir of the streets ; there is no other spot in Seville where the religious spirit more richly breathes its large and mystic spell. But at first you will see nothing. The Spaniards understand so well that light does not help emotion. White clouds of rolling incense float heavily in the air ; only far off, in the intricate gloom, the candles at some of the altars flicker in patterns of gold. Then slowly the light, stealing like distant scattered stars through the pure colours of the stained-glass windows, seems to grow clearer. The immense pillars detach themselves from the shadows as mountain-peaks appearing from the morning's mist, and you become aware of great spaces that look unlimited. To wait here, silent, is to be at home to every emotion ; but for a time you will feel too borne away by such vastness even to think.

The special atmosphere of Seville, as one realises it slowly in this way, first, and not least strongly, from the sunny streets, glad with the life of the people, from Alcázar and from many of the other buildings, and then from the Cathedral, with its suggestion of strong emotion, will find its last and most satisfying

expression in the Giralda. With its Moorish base and Christian belfry—the two so in harmony that



*The Cathedral, Seville.*

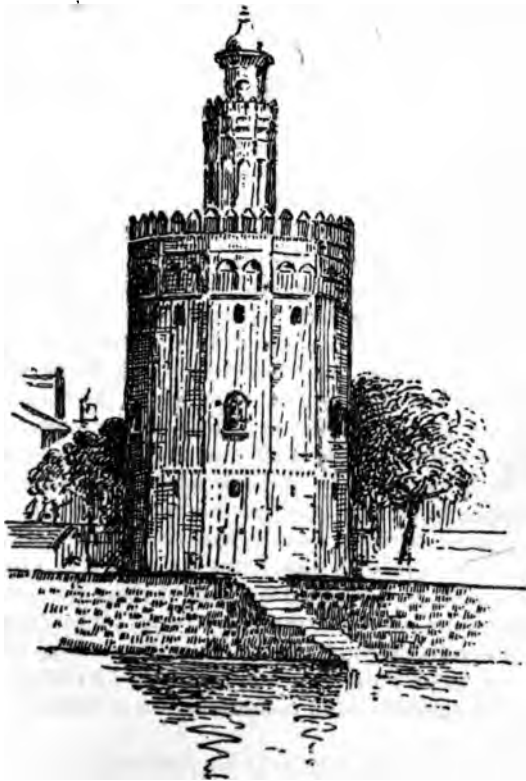
they appear as one—it is the symbol of that special characteristic of the city, a capacity for accepting life on its own terms; the secret of its joyous, successful content. It is the lesson of the East, which elsewhere we find as a memory; but here, in active life, among

these people, who still remember to pluck to-day and be content, who to-morrow die.

The Giralda is always delicately joyous. Maybe the great bells in the belfry, each ceremoniously christened in memory of some saint, are a trifle heavy; the great statue of La Fé is a little self-conscious—these things are Christian, not Moorish. But you will not notice this, unless you examine deeply. And the Giralda is the most unspoilt Moorish work in Spain.

The prospect from its upper gallery, as I saw it once, with the landscape all flushing towards a sunset of gold, is another of those sights that one can never forget. Facing all the winds of that glowing sky, I looked down on Seville, clear cut as an arabesque pattern in the limpid atmosphere. Immediately below was the Cathedral; great plains, broken by sculptured abysses; deeper still was the Court of Oranges, a square of illumined green. I could just see the large sculptured figures, especially clear were those in the bas-relief of Christ Driving the Money-Changers from the Temple, a Christian addition, placed over the Moorish *Puerta del Perdón*, when the Court of Oranges was used as the Exchange of the city. A woman was entering the great bronze-mounted doors; she seemed to wait, and I remembered that she would be praying at the altar within.

Around these buildings, the city was spread as a map, wherein the white, closely packed houses were like toys. I looked down into *patios*, gleaming with whitewash; on flower-decked roofs of brown and yellow tiles; along narrow streets that wound like dark threads between, in which the people appeared like flies caught in a great



. The Golden Tower. Geville.

net ; and then, across all the house-tops, to the wide beautiful land beyond the Roman walls, which seemed to stretch onwards for league upon league. And the whole face of the landscape changed colour moment by moment as the light changed.

From this height, and in this clear, wonderful air, I seemed to have for the moment an increased power of sight to penetrate the wide spaces. And as I gazed the mirage grew. Beyond the dark bulk of the Alcázar stretched the Parque, the Delicias, and the Prado de San Sebastian, and the long lines of sun-ruddled trees seemed to lose themselves among the red-clay hills of Corea, which showed a long low line on the right bank of the great tranquil river, whose yellow water was just now tinged with rose. Further away were the great marshes bordering the estuary. The sunset colours of blue and rose and gold seemed to rest here, captured by the fine white mist that arose slowly, looking like a veil of gossamer. In the other direction, westwards, was the Moorish Tower of Gold, and a little further the Plaza de Toros. On the other bank of the Guadalquiver, Triana was whitely silhouetted against the moving colour. Then, among the low hills, beyond the Cartuja, I saw the ancient Roman amphitheatre of Italica, while in the extreme distance were the blue mountains, their shadows gold-tinted.

The cool evening scents stole upwards ; they wafted across my senses with many memories. It was a moment for reverie, in which the mind escaped into a clearer air.

A company of brown hawks came flitting with tremulous wings, hither and thither ; soon they settled

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upon their nests in the niches of the open parapets below. And then, of a sudden, the twilight fell, wrapping the city in a mysterious luminous blue.

#### IV

Looking at the pictures of Murillo, and still more at those of Zurbarán, in the old Convento de la Merced, now the Museo Provincial, the Cathedral, or elsewhere, you see again the spirit of Andalusia.

A love of facts rather than an appreciation of the ideal is the pervading characteristic of these pictures. We almost search in vain for delicacy of form or any trace of exquisiteness. For in Spain, perhaps to a greater extent than in any other country, art is the reflection of the life and temperament of the people; and to understand Seville you must know her painters.

In the Museo de la Merced there are interesting pictures by Zurbarán, by Herrera el Viego, by Juan de las Roelas, by Valdés Leal, and by the earlier painters, as well as an admirable portrait of El Greco, by himself, the most wonderful painting there. But at first you can see nothing except Murillo. His saints swim before you in mists of over-luscious colour; meaningless cherubs flutter around them as they minister to picturesque beggars clad in carefully draped rags; Virgins garbed in the conventional blue and white, their feet resting upon the crescent moon, vanish into luminous vapour; their robes rustle in the air, and their sun-lighted faces repeat the very complexion of Seville. And, seeing these pictures, I

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understood how they have become the idol of the people, and have ceased to interest the more exacting lover of the beauty which is truth.

Murillo was impelled by a desire for realism ; his Madonnas and his saints are peasants whose emotions are purely human. But his interpretation of the animating impulse of his country was superficial and localised. Certainly in his pictures you have many of the national traits—religious emotion, a dramatic delight in strong contrasts, an exuberant fancy, with an entire want of ideal realisation. But all his compositions are works of his hand rather than of his soul. You feel that the figures are dummies masquerading as people ; always his saints, his virgins, are alike—the name alone differs. They all pose, unthinkingly, in the subtly interwoven light he knew so well how to paint, living only in the moment which their conventionalised attitudes perpetuate. You do not realise them as personalities greeting you from the canvas, like the intense painful faces of El Greco, or the wonderful creations of Velazquez ; if you remember them at all it is as part of a sweet and pleasing picture. And for this reason Murillo's religious idylls have no special meaning to-day. They were conceived for Andalusia, and the artistic result to the world would be the same if these pictures had never been painted.

Now turn to Zurbarán. How different are his saints. Look at their faces : each is a portrait. Before these saints gained their sanctity, they must have struggled as men, and learnt the enlightenment of sin. Note the truth of his scriptural scenes ; the dignity of those different renderings of the Crucifixion ; his conception of the boy Christ ; then mark



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how\* the peasants he depicts are almost startling in their truth. Never did Zurbarán paint dummies, as Murillo almost always did ; the heads of his figures are strongly individualised—no one has ever portrayed monks as he has done, and his pictures form a portrait gallery of the women and the men of his day.

Look especially at "San Hugo Visiting the Carthusians in their Refectory." The picture is thinly painted, the execution is hasty ; but how simple it is, how strong, and how true ! The monks, clad in the white, fleecy robes of their order, are seated around a table eating their midday repast. In the foreground stands the aged Hugo, attended by a boy-page ; he has come to reprove them for dining upon flesh-meat. His purple vestments give an effect of colour, in fine contrast with the white frocks of the cowed brothers. Those cold, strong faces!—the scene is a very real presentment of mediæval Spanish life.

In this desire for facts, which in Zurbarán was an impelling passion that operates in every picture, we sometimes find incongruities, bordering upon the ludicrous.† Women saints are the beauties of Seville,

\* The finest example is "The Adoration of the Shepherds," until recently in the Palace of San Telmo, but now removed with other fine pictures in the collection of the Infanta Doña Maria Luisa Fernanda de Bourbon. The magnificent picture on the same subject in the National Gallery of London is now attributed, I think rightly, to Zurbarán.

† A remarkable portrait of a Spanish woman, named St. Margaret, has been bought recently for the National Gallery of London. Zurbarán is one of the few Spanish painters who can be studied out of Spain.

their dresses half fashionable, half fantastic, while their pink and white complexions show the prevalent use of rouge and powder. The absurdity of clothing saints in the garb of fashion would not be manifest to Zurbarán ; he cared nothing what name was given to his portraits ; all that he cared for was to depict what he saw ; and as he could never have female saints for his models, he painted the women that he saw each day in Seville ; but to please the Church he called them saints. Like most Spanish painters, Zurbarán was deficient in sensitiveness and intuitive artistic perception. His work is always more interesting than great. But no other painter of Andalusia \* has answered more simply and strongly to the call of his Spanish temperament. Here we find a realism, passionate and serious, expressed with singular directness : Murillo gives us one aspect of Andalusia ; Zurbarán gives us Spain.

## V

But it is not enough to visit the Museo de la Merced, if you would know the pictures of Seville. Here, as in most Spanish towns, the Cathedral and the churches are the true museums, and some of the finest pictures must be sought in the unaccommodating gloom of sacristies and side-chapels. In Andalusia art was always devotional ; her pictures had other purposes

\* Velazquez was born in Seville, but there are none of his pictures in the public collections of the city. "The Madonna giving the Chasuble to San Ildefonso," in the Archbishop's Palace, is his work, and may be seen by special permission.

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to serve besides the æsthetic. They were painted for the Church to enforce its lessons ; they were used as warnings, and as a means of recording the lives of the saints. Many pictures remain where they were painted ; often you cannot see enough to know whether they are beautiful ; you can just make the canvas out in spots. I tried in vain, for instance, to see the "Final Judgment," by Herrera' el Viego, in the Parroquina of San Bernardo. I climbed on a chair, then went up a ladder, and with the kindly aid of the sacristan's taper I caught glimpses of a multitude of figures, and I could see that they were drawn with a fine freedom of handling—that was all. A vision of a woman, resting in the foreground among the bands of the wicked, haunted me with its suggestion of extreme life ; but I could not see it properly because of the covering of dirt. I had to be content to return to the painter's two pictures in the Museo Provincial ; and these also are hung in a wretched light.

The paintings of the elder Herrera, which can only be studied at Seville,\* give us another, earlier, and perhaps less individual, expression of the national love of realism. Probably the greatest merit of his work is his understanding of the beauty of the human figure, a knowledge so supremely difficult to painters whose art was directed by the Inquisition.

It is interesting to note that Herrera was obviously the man of his pictures ; his turbulent temper, which drove pupils † from his studio, and sent his son to

\* The Prado has no work by Herrera. There is one good picture of his in the Louvre, and one of less importance at Dresden.

† Velazquez studied first with Herrera.

work in Italy, speaks in these figures that at times seem to be hurled upon his canvas. His work was experimental, and his pictures are full of faults. But if you compare them with the paintings of many of his contemporaries—the conscientious, academic Pacheco, for example, or Murillo's master, the feeble Juan del Castillo, painters whose pictures crowd the churches of Seville—you will feel that the man, however imperfectly, had something to say. This is why these few canvases—even in Seville Herrera's pictures are rare—still claim notice, as being one link in the long unbroken chain of the Spanish national painters.

Herrera did not create a new manifestation of art ; he simply resisted the Italian influence that weakened Spanish painting, especially in the sixteenth century—worked with the old direct vigour, and transmitted much of all that was truly Spanish in the art which preceded his own.

It is among these early painters that the most interesting art in Seville will be seen. Go to the suburb of Triana, and in the church of Santa Ana there is the sweetest Madonna and Child, which reminds one afresh of the strength and naïve beauty of early work, where the painter, less burdened with tradition, was able more readily to express himself. The "Virgin de la Rosa" is the name given to the picture ; it represents Mary embracing her Child, guarded by angels, and is the work of Alejo Fernandez, a painter who came, with his brother Juan, from Córdoba, in 1508, to work in Seville Cathedral. It is of the dignity and serious simplicity of the work that I would speak ; the charming way in which it forms

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a pattern of exquisite colour. This painter saw beautifully and strongly. There are other pictures of his in the Sacristía\* altar of the Cathedral, but to me they have not quite the fresh charm of the Madonna of Santa Ana.

In these first years of the Sevillian School, when art was sincere and young, many pictures were painted, less beautiful, perhaps, than the glowing canvases of Alejo Fernandez, but all strong work; all interesting, in a lesser or greater measure, as revealing the development of the national style.

Earliest of all, there is the great fresco of San Cristobál, in the old church of San Julian, by Juan Sanchez de Castro—alas! ruined with heavy repainting. A panel picture of the Virgin with St. Peter and St. Jerome, by the same painter, though dirty and damaged, is of greater merit. The canvas was found at San Julian, but is now in the Cathedral. There is an interesting picture of "The Entombment" in the collection of my friend Don José López Cepero, who lives at No. 7 Plaza de Alfaro, the house which Murillo is supposed to have occupied. It is by one Pedro Sanchez, and is the only picture that remains by the painter of whom nothing is known except that his name is given by Cean Bermudez among the illustrious artists of Spain. But it matters little that he is forgotten, for the picture that he has left is beautiful.

\* There appears to be some uncertainty as to the locality of these pictures. Baedeker says they are in the Palacio Arzobispal. The fact is they were removed from the Cathedral to the Palacio for some years during the repairing of the building; but they are now returned to their original position.

There is a pleasing "Pleta" in the the Sacristía de los Cálices of the Cathedral, by Juan Nuñez, pupil and successor of Sanchez de Castro. Nuñez had a sombre humour—a very Spanish trait—and in two pictures of the saints Michael and Gabriel he presents them adorned with peacock's wings. Then there are the two pictures, the well-known "Descent from the Cross" and the "Purification of the Virgin," both hung in the dimness of the Cathedral: Pedro Campaña's work, a Flemish artist who came to paint in Seville, in 1548; somewhat dull in colour but true in drawing, painted later, with their more certain knowledge, they are pictures very interesting in their strong appeal. And there are the pictures of Luis de Vargas, his contemporary, also in the Cathedral: an early painting, "The Nativity," conceived with Spanish reality, in which all the details are simple and each figure is a portrait; and the more famous "La Generacion," with its fine drawing, in which you seem to feel the joy that stirred the painter as he fashioned the strong form of Adam.

Of greater interest, perhaps, is the more complex Juan de las Roelas,\* a painter whose single home is Seville, where his work may be seen in the Cathedral, in the Museum, and in many of the churches. Here we have pictures that have kept their brightness through the centuries. In many of the large compositions there is confusion among the crowd of figures; as in the "Marterio de San Andrés" of the Museum or in his Cathedral picture, "Santiago Destroying the Moors in the Battle of Clavijo." But how expressive of

\* There is one picture by Roelas in the Prado. His work is hardly known except in Andalusia.

Spain are all these powerfully contrasted forms that so visibly delighted the painter. And in some of his best work Roelas gives us the brightest visions. Such are "El Transito de San Isidore," in the parish church of the saint; the "Apoteosis de San Hermengildo" and "The Descent of the Holy Ghost," both in the church of the Hospital de la Sangre. These pictures are difficult to see, one is hidden behind the altar, the others hang at a tremendous height where the light is dim. There are three good pictures by Roelas in the University, a "Holy Child," "The Adoration of the Kings," and the "Presentation of the Boy Christ in the Temple"; but a picture I like better is "St. Peter Freed by the Angel," hidden in a side-chapel in the church of San Pedro. Then how beautiful is his "Virgin and Santa Ana," in the Museum. In this simple picture the figures have all the rare fairness that Roelas always gives to women; and the soft living glow of their flesh is beautiful.

Juan de las Roelas, as well as Campaña and Luis de Vargas, studied in Italy, and the insistent realism of their work was modified, in some measure, by the suavity of the older and more sensitive art. Their pictures are not as Spanish as those of the elder Herrera or those of Zurbarán, but their work is robust and personal. For always it was one of the essential gifts of the truly Spanish painters that they could imitate and absorb without degenerating into copyists.

As the years passed, and art in Seville grew older, many painters of lesser fame trod in the steps worn by these others. It is not possible, nor is it necessary, to enumerate them; too often they exaggerated the faults of the masters they copied; and by a slavish repetition

of accepted ideas—the inevitable fault of age—they weakened art.

But the spirit of the nation was too strong to sleep. The habit of her painters was serious and dignified; always the most significant characteristic of their art was an adherence—almost brutal at times—to facts; and added to this, their work was strongly passionate, an emotion expressing itself chiefly in a rich wealth of colour. It is contended sometimes that Spanish pictures are wanting in beauty. But are we not too apt to confine beauty to certain forms of accepted expression? Surely any art that has life has beauty; and no one can deny that life is the source and sap of Spanish painting.



## GRANADA

“Glory of the kings who have disappeared from the earth, honour of those by whom thou shalt be succeeded; wert thou compared to the stars they would be humbled, were splendour and nobility wanting to thy dignity thy person would give it sufficient lustre.”—ARABIC INSCRIPTION IN THE ALHAMBRA.

### I

**T**HE curtain trembles as it rises on the last scene of the Moorish dominion in Spain.

In Córdoba, in Toledo, and in Seville, the Christians had triumphed, and the Moors had fallen. Their hour was near at hand. “La Allah illah Allah!” (There is no God but Allah). Yet for two and a half centuries Granada remained unconquered, although paying tribute to the Christians. And the city waxed strong; the people spent their money and their love to make it beautiful—a pearl of price, sitting on the border of the verdant Vega at the feet of the snowy mountains of the moon. And the marvellous Red Palace was built.

“Thou givest safety from the breeze to the blades of grass, and inspirest terror in the very stars of heaven. When the shining stars quiver, it is through dread of thee, and when the grass of the field bends down it is to give thee thanks”

was one of the mottoes they engraved upon the walls of their citadel.

Then Muley Aly, better known by his surname, Abu-l-Hasen, inflamed with arrogance, refused the exacted tribute, and led the Moors to assault Zahara.



This was the beginning of the end.

“Woe to Granada!” cried her citizens. “The ruins of Zahara will fall upon our heads. The hour of our desolation is at hand.”

Retribution followed swiftly.

The redoubtable Christian warrior, the Marquis of Cadiz, captured the stronghold of Alhama. And a

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second cry of anguish rang through Granada : " Ay de mi Alhama ! " (Woe for my Alhama).

How terrible a thing it is sometimes to look back across the sadness of the centuries, to see history as a drama, and to watch the acts of the poor human puppets, knowing the result of their follies. While the Christians thirsted to devour their land, the Moors could not cease from quarrelling among themselves. Grain by grain the juice was sucked from the pomegranate ; once more the over-ripe fruit was ready to fall. " Allah Achbar ! " (Allah is most great). It was destiny. But Bobabdil Ez-Zogoiby, most unhappy of rulers, hastened the doom.

On March 22, 1491, began the last siege of the city. Ferdinand had already laid waste the Vega ; his armies had trodden where the ripe grain had been as vivid gold, and the colours of the smiling fields were dark. In vain did Musa, most gallant of Paynim chiefs, try to avert the destiny of the city. Prodigies of valour did this leader achieve ; the waters of the Darro ran red with blood, and the smoke of fires mingled with the white mists of the mountains. But Ferdinand was in earnest. He remembered the means whereby Abd-er-Rahmān III. had broken proud Toledo, and when an accidental fire destroyed his camp, he built Santa Fé, in eighty days, a town of solid stone, which stands to-day. Then he waited for Granada to starve.

The end had come.

On November 25 an act of capitulation was signed. There was a brief truce ; a few weeks of waiting, while the Moors watched for the help that never came, then, at the fall of the year, they gave up the city.

“Allah Achbar!” cried the unhappy Bobabdil, as on the second day of the new year he delivered the keys of the Alhambra to Ferdinand of Aragon. “They are thine, O king, since Allah so decrees it; use thy success with clemency and moderation.”

The Christians filed into the city, rejoicing and singing psalms. Bobabdil passed across the mountains; once he turned, and, as he looked back upon the city he had lost, he burst into tears.

“You do well,” said Ayesha, his mother, “to weep like a woman for what you could not defend like a man.”

“Woe is me!” he cried, “when was sorrow ever equal to mine?”

Ever since the spot has been known as “El Ultimo Suspiro del Moro.”

“Such was the inimitable decree of destiny,” writes the Arab historian. “Blessed be Allah, who exalteth and abaseth the kings of the earth according to his divine will, in the fulfilment of which consists that eternal justice which regulates all human affairs.”

## II

In Seville you do not trouble to remember its history, and for me I could never quite persuade myself that the city had one. Its atmosphere is so living; the past blends so perfectly with the present that you forget it. And always you return to the contemplation of its beautiful life.

How different is Granada! Time, the tamer of proud cities, has had its will here. And coming from

Seville, you feel that you have passed from sunshine into shadow. The place is sad, grey and empty. There is no trade ; literally the city exists on its past, eking out a spare existence from the strangers who visit its monuments. And where there is life—around the two great hotels, and in the few streets where the shops are decked out to attract the visitors with inferior goods, none personal to the place—it is all noisy, and a little vulgar. Granada does not rest in a resigned dream of memory like white Córdoba, nor is it proud in its decay as Toledo. Here age is not beautiful ; the place drags on, exhausted—as women, sometimes, tired of the futile deception of effort, grow careless, and wish to be forgotten, conscious of the ruthless cruelty of life. The very people in the streets appear aimless and without spirit ; except the beggars and the ill-informed guides, who are listlessly importunate. It is a hungry town. And for those who feel the influence of places, and have an instinct for drawing their secrets, Granada will seem burdened with the sadness that lingers around all last things.

In the air itself there is something of decay. The white mists creep down from the snowy heights of the Sierra Nevada and rest shroud-like over the Vega. Everywhere one seems to catch the echo of that *ultimo suspiro del Moro*. One inhales the past bitterly at Granada.

Everything seems to grow out of decay and to be returning thither. There is something absolutely startling in this degradation that meets you everywhere. The Casa del Cabildo Antigua, Yûsuf I.'s great Moorish university, which was afterwards a royal residence of the Catholic kings, is now degraded to a

warehouse, used for the storage of textile goods. Hardly a trace of its glory remains; its inscriptions and mosaics are obliterated, only its ceiling is beautiful.

Visit the fragments of the Casa del Gallo de Viento, still with its charming court and tower, once crowned with the celebrated vane of Ibn Habûs; all that remains of the Alcázar of Bâds; or the Casa del Carbón, known also as the Alhóndiga, the famous Moorish granary, with its arches, its mosaics, and its beautiful stalactite vaulting, now all blackened with the coal-dust of the *carboneros*; or the little-used Alcaiceria market, once a Moorish bazaar; or to the Plaza de Bibarrambla, where the gate of Bîb ar-Ramla stood, the favourite spot for Moorish pageants, to-day a dreary space, saddened with the memory of many fights; or go with different, but not less sad, memories, to the mosque, now the Ermita de San Sebastián, where Bobabdil surrendered the keys of the Alhambra to Ferdinand on his departure from the city.

To live in Granada is to understand all the desolation of conquest; nowhere else do you realise so fully the menace of destiny. In all the city only two buildings remain at all unspoilt: one is the fine villa, Cuato Real de Santo Domingo, once the Al-Madjarra of the Moors, which stands near to the Teatro de Isabel la Católica, in the Plaza de Santo Domingo; the other is the Alcázar de Genil, Yûsuf's palace for his wives, on the borders of the Vega, and here the hand of the restorer has done much mischief.

In the Campo del Triunfo, of old the romantic centre of the city's life, the ruin of the Puerta de Elivra, chief of the twenty gates that then gave entrance

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to the city, looks down very sadly on Alonso de Mena's statue of the Virgin, and on the Plaza de Toros ; in another place one sees all that is left of the Moorish bridges, a few solitary arches rising mockingly from the rivers ; one comes suddenly upon neglected gardens, great dilapidated *patios*, and fragments of old walls ; sometimes a Moorish palace has been built into a Christian edifice, as the Dâr al-Horra, house of the Moorish nobles, which forms one part of the Franciscan nunnery of Santa Isabel la Real. All the buildings of Granada have this aspect of having outlived their original life. Church has succeeded mosque, quite literally, as in San Salvador, which incorporates the *patio* and other fragments of the chief mosque of the Albaicin ; San Nicolás and Santa Ana stand on Moorish foundations ; the tower of San Juan de los Reyes is a minaret with the usual Moorish base and Christian belfry.

And as you wander in these streets, in which the silence is so oppressive, painfully in sympathy with their atmosphere, Granada will seem a place in which it is impossible to feel young enough to forget. Always you hear the conquering armies of Ferdinand and Isabella, tramping through the city. It is this that is so disquieting here ; never are you rid of the shadow of that conquest. And your sadness is the restless, resisting sadness of the West, not that calm acceptance born of the East. You cannot easily catch the delicate Moorish spirit in Granada.

For some time you will wonder what can charm you in all this decay. And the gipsy quarter, the Carmino del Sacro Monte, in the Albaicin suburb, to which you will hasten after your first sad walk through

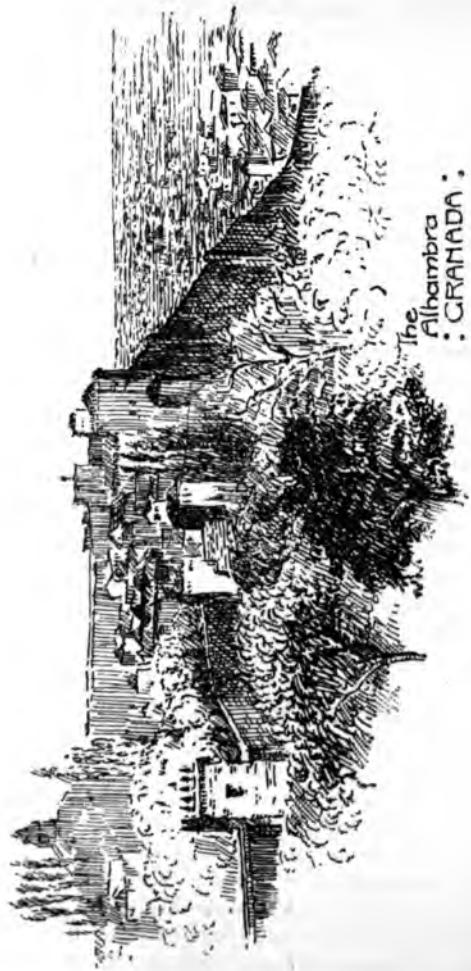
the city, will also disappoint you. Here there is no colour, no barbaric picturesqueness even, nothing but squalid life; and the horror of those dwelling-lairs, carved out of the rock, will not readily leave you. The people are sullen and sad, as if not caring to distinguish themselves from the atmosphere around them. Some of the women will tell your fortunes and dance for you, if you pay them sufficiently. And when they dance they seem different, more acutely alive; they are not beautiful, but their slow, sinuous movements are wonderful, and their eyes flash a slow fire—angry eyes that seem to remember misery.

### III

But do not judge Granada too quickly, wait until you have, as it were, lived yourself into the city. Forget the big hotels so incongruously near to the Alhambra, the new, unsatisfying streets, the clamorous guides, the beggars—all the disagreeables of a city that trades on its past. Then the place will take a new aspect, grow human, respond to your affections, and you will grow to love it; not with the same joyous response with which you answered to the appeal of Seville, nor with the tenderness you gave to Córdoba, nor the strong passion that seized you in Toledo, but with a different, sadder love, such as a woman feels towards a man, after long years, when he has changed, and she knows that still she cannot forget.

And now you will begin to find out how much beauty is left as a remembrance in all this decay; you will understand why the guide-books speak of Granada





The  
Alhambra  
: GRANADA :


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as "the culminating point of a journey in Spain." No longer will you be oppressed by the arrogant initials and arms of the Catholic sovereigns; for now the delicate Moorish decorations will speak to you from under their cover of dirt or whitewash.

And there is one possession that no conquest can take from Granada: the Vega. How beautiful is the suggestion of the name—the Arabic *beck'ah*, which means a plain between two mountains, watered by many streams.

Go, especially in the closing hours of the afternoon, when the air has cooled and the sun is sinking towards its setting, to the Monte Claro, which stands above the *ermita* of San Miguel el Alto, or perhaps, better still, to the Sacro Monte, a little further to the east, or indeed to any spot among the lower slopes of the mountains that rise above the city. Looking down from such a vantage-point, Granada seems far off, all its towers and buildings dwindled by the distance into a mere cluster of white and yellow, like a great cameo in an exquisite setting.

Behind, the "Mountains of the Sun" make a dark fantastic silhouette, where the land melts into the sky; nearer, just beneath you, upon the left, the Alhambra sits, in the midst of its rocky, tree-girt height, by the side of its river, a great red mass banded with green, now lighted with hot colour; and beyond, the pale-green Vega spreads, as a spacious and smooth green lake, which flows on in gentle undulations, curving beautifully as the lines of a woman's body, until it merges in the lurid, red-brown of the Sierra Nevada, desolate valleys and ragged towering heights, where the luxuriant, hesitating feminine loses itself in the dark passionate



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clasp of the male. And all at once you gain a sight of snow-capped Mulhacen, and then, as the day passes, the mountains flush towards a sunset of flaming gold.

The jewelled plain is illumined with strong colours, changing each moment as the light wanders across its green pastures, chequered with white roads. Here and there a hill-village rises as an island out of a lake, and between, in every direction, rivers and waterways glisten, reflecting the same notes of vivid green, like great lizards scurrying to and fro.

The Vega is most wonderful at sunset ; the silence is the silence of joy, and in the tranquil landscape is no trace of the past, which you know is there. A shepherd drives his flock down the mountain path to be folded for the night. "Vaya, usted, con Dios !" comes his greeting. Presently the dull chant of the Cathedral bells breaks the silence ; and the notes, slowly recurring, linger in the still air. And looking nearer, again, through the growth of aloes and prickly-pears, towards Granada, the place seems all changed. The scene plays an exquisite rhythm on your soul, and the true emotion of Granada steals over you !

This is the hour, too, in which to visit the Generalife, the one spot in Granada, perhaps in all Andalusia, which has kept, more than any other, its Moorish aspect ; combining in its palace and gardens, in spite of decay and alterations, much of that full suggestion of all beautiful things that was their gift. Here you have the charm of delicate architecture, of richly coloured tiles, mosaics and rare inscriptions, with those of pure flowing waters, of great clipped cypresses, of myrtles and orange-trees, and the glow of flowers.

The name, it is said, is a corruption of the Arabic Djennat-al-'Arff, which means the garden of Arff, perhaps, of the architect, and is connected probably with the name of its first owner. But I like much better an account I have found in an old history, which says that the name in Arabic signifies the house of love, of dance and pleasure; and states further that it was built by one Omar, a passionate lover of music, that he might retire thither and entirely give himself up to that amusement. I know not whether this is true, perhaps not, so often romance is more beautiful than facts. But I like to think that some one lived once, who built this exquisite palace and garden, wherein he could give his soul to music.

“Charming palace, thou presentest thyself with majesty; thy splendour equals thy greatness, and thy light shines upon everything by which thou art surrounded. Thou art worthy of every eulogium, for thy ornaments have in them something divine. Thy garden is embellished with flowers which repose upon their stalks and exhale the sweetest perfumes; fresh air agitates the orange-trees and spreads abroad the sweet odour of its blossoms. I hear voluptuous music joined to the rustling of the leaves of thy grove. Everything around is harmonious, green, and flowering. . . .”

Such is part of the inscription over the arcades of the Court of the Pond, and how perfectly the rich imagery of the words recalls the charm of the garden. Surely when the spirit of the departing Moors sought for a place wherein to rest it wafted here.

## IV

The Cathedral is the most living building in Granada. Diego de Siloe, in designing its plan, is said, I know not with what truth, to have taken the human body for his model: the great chapel is the head, the breast and the trunk are represented by the nave, the two collateral aisles are the arms, and the rest of the choir forms the feet.

The admirable proportions of the building are praised by Fergusson, who delights in its careful fulfilment of all the canons of Renaissance art. "Looking at its plan only," he writes, "this is certainly one of the finest churches in Europe. It would be difficult to point out any other, in which the central aisle leads up to the dome, so well proportioned to its dimensions, and to the dignity of the high altar which stands under it."

And yet all this perfection—brilliant, beautiful even, but not quite satisfying—which speaks so eloquently as the expression of the Catholic sovereigns exuberant with conquest, at first leaves you unmoved. The clear light that falls so coldly on the white stone seems unsympathetic; it destroys that sense of mystery so helpful to the emotional sentiment. Your impression is one of surprise, not of awe. Here the plateresque riots with all its delicate silver fantasies. And the effect is almost startling, when, on coming suddenly out of the Placenta de la Lonja, where, maybe, you have been lingering in the ruin of Yūsuf's university, you pass through the gorgeous Capilla Real, with its fine royal tombs and superb *retablo*, into its light and

airy spaciousness, sparkling with white and gold. Time seems to have leaped forward ; and in one step you are transported out of the old Moorish capital—you might be in Italy.

Intensely brilliant is the Capilla Mayor. The dome rising over the high altar is very lofty, and is supported by an arcade of twenty-two Corinthian columns, of white stone, which gives an effect of great strength and lightness. Finely gilded statues of the Apostles are placed upon the architrave ; and above them two rows of beautiful pictures glow with the softest colours, in the rich light falling from the stained-glass windows, which rise still higher in the dome.

Nowhere else is Alonso Cano so effective as here, for here his work—the least Spanish of all Spanish art—is in harmony with the delicate spirit of the chapel, and becomes an essential part of its life. His Virgins and tender child-Christis seem of the same fair world. And as you gaze upwards for long minutes, enjoying the warm colour and pleasant drawing, you forget his faults, and feel a real affection for him—the Cathedral owes so much of its beauty to the sixteen years in which this painter-sculptor worked there. Yet, after all, I like better the pictures of his pupils, Fray Antanasius Bocanegra and Juan Escalante de Sevilla. They are more Spanish ; they have much of the charm, and very little of the weakness, of their master.

I shall not attempt any enumeration of the details of the exterior of the Cathedral. The massive west façade was the work of Alonso Cano, who was a better sculptor than he was a painter ; to some extent he followed the earlier plans of Siloe. The four great

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doorways, and especially the Puerta del Perdón, are densely decorated with sculptured figures, by Siloe and his pupil Juan de Maede, and are in themselves museums of imagery. It was Juan de Maede who built the lowest Doric stage of the North Tower; the second and third storeys were added later. The South Tower was never finished.

It is worth while to ascend the Tower. The emotional effect of seeing Granada spread beneath you will not easily be forgotten. Straight before you the pile of the Alhambra seems to crouch beneath the hurrying white and steadfast blue of the sky, like some great monster sunk in listless slumber. Around it the medley of narrow streets, with their closely huddled buildings, widen gradually northwards, making a great stretch of heavy yellow, broken here and there by the white line of some tower, or by an open space, showing black, though sometimes the colour is green where there is a garden with a few trees. The Darro cuts a sharp pattern through it all, as it loses itself, then comes out broader and joins its sister river. It is all very silent; only a few figures and one team of straining mules move slowly across the *plaza* below. The town rises sadly, as it seems, out of the bright, luscious green of the tree-girt valley, as a tombstone rises from its grassy mound.

You feel shut off from the present, you look back instinctively into the past, shut in with that same sadness that has moulded Granada into its own image. You remember how history is written in those buildings, and can still be read in them—the whole life of a people hidden away in a few stone ruins, but living on with the persistence of indestructible things. Then

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your eyes wander outwards to the Vega, with the mountains beyond. Everywhere the landscape makes delicate pictures of line and colour, in strange contrast with all this decay. Sadly, you turn again to gaze at the city. Just beneath you are the Lonja and the Palacio Arzobispal, and a little further is the Casa de Ayuntamiento. As the light strikes the covered façades you can almost make out the different figures; and this florid, modern display in stone seems to flaunt a little in the sunlight.

Your thoughts return to the wonderful white and gilded church beneath you, so incongruous here, so like a noisy criticism on the ruin around. Then you remember the elaborate monuments, in the Capilla Real, of the Catholic sovereigns, of their unhappy daughter Queen Joan the Mad, and of her husband Phillip; and your thoughts remain with the four simple coffins of lead, iron-bound, below in the crypt, in which they rest. And, of a sudden, you are conscious of a new harmony between the Cathedral and its city; for now conquest seems but a passionate illusion.

## V

But it is to see the Alhambra that every one comes to Granada; the city is but the setting to this Moorish jewel.

What a pleasure it is to write the name *Medinât Alhamrá*, the Red Town—already one seems to feel a glow of warm colour—and how difficult it is to add anything to it. Before attempting to do so, one makes diligent search in the dictionary for such words.



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as exquisite, magnificent, radiant, delicate, and beautiful ; one even tries to urge one's jaded pen to the invention of synonyms of vivid significance. The result is failure, and a hasty retreat to the commonplace. For the worn tags of description will not serve one here ; the beauty is so rare, so insistent and overwhelming, that it seems an insult to label it ; as well try to give form to the romance-world of one's dreams. And, indeed, it is almost impossible to think of the small Red Palace as quite a real place. Nor does seeing it convince you at all ; nothing that you have ever dreamed is as amazing as what you find. Everywhere perfection is realised so beautifully that there is no call for your imagination ; you have simply to gaze, and wonder. It is . . . again verbal parallels fail . . . well, just that which is most beautiful to you—the moment of your most perfect romance captured and immortalised in stone. No, the Alhambra cannot be mirrored coldly in words.

Like all Moorish structures, the exterior is plain, being built with the fine primitive severity of Byzantine work, which affords no hint of the fantasy of ornament within. Seen from San Nicolás, on the right bank of the valley, in the Albaicin suburb, the place, perhaps, which gives the finest view of the exterior, with its tiled roofs and long, low walls, turreted here and there and pierced with narrow windows, it looks like some monstrous citadel. And what pictures those flat surfaces of sharp colour make against the sky, especially in the clear atmosphere of spring ; rising, as they do, like rocks of red sandstone above the dense foliage of the trees ; then, in certain lights, the red walls seem in places almost to be a shading of the

encircling green, as if soft moss rested upon the stones ; and the same green colour is reflected in the water of the Darro, which rushes thirstily after the long drought, fed with the melted snow from the mountains.

Few places are more beautiful than the green wood which lies around the Moorish citadel. There are fountains, and there is the sweet sound of running water, and there are seats everywhere ; white paths wind upwards, between rustling walls of green, where in spring the nightingales sing above the violets that empurple the ground. It is always cool here, for the fire of the southern sun never penetrates the awning of quivering leaves. Granada, its memories and ruin, seems shut off as by a veil of quiet. You find yourself instantly in a new atmosphere, ready for romance, and you are glad with the mere pleasure of being there.

The Alhambra still has its old gateways, as it has its walls. A massive structure of red, shading to orange, flanked with towers, and pierced with the Gate of Justice, gives admittance into the outer court. But the actual entrance to the Moorish palace is a modern, unpretending doorway.

You enter, and from the terrace in the Plaza de los Aljibes, which overlooks the city, you pass into the Court of the Myrtles. You stand upon a pavement of marble ; before you stretches a long pool of limpid water, and beyond, at the ends, are a row of arches, borne by slender columns of marble, with capitals of delicate beauty. The water reflects the whole graceful arcade, so that in imagination you seem to gaze into a second chamber still more mysterious and lovely. Hardly a ripple is made by the water as it oozes gently into the great reservoir. Rosy sunlight plays upon it,

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and the surface, here and there, when the light strikes it, flashes in lines of flame, as the gold-fish dart to and fro. The myrtles cast a fringe of green around its margin.

It is all like an invocation of an Eastern sorcerer, and the thousand and one nights, of a sudden, become true. For here the Blue Bird of Fancy flies more strongly than the White Bird of Truth. It is hardly conceivable that people lived here; and you seem to understand, for the first time, the brilliant dominion of the Moors in Spain. Only a people with a history like theirs could have reigned here; life lived here could but be a romance . . . Romance and the Alhambra! . . . are they not interchangeable words?

In attempting to describe these wondrous, many-coloured chambers, it is impossible to avoid the words "delicate and exquisite"—quite impossible; and the Court of Lions is the most delicate and exquisite of them all.

The Hall of the Ambassadors, at the base of the great Tower of Comares, is larger, and it shows perhaps, more fully the unparalleled splendour of Moorish decoration; brilliant, full of colour, adorned with a labyrinth of intricate designs and Arabic inscriptions, the effect is so gorgeous that you are oppressed; and your eyes seek for some plain surface; but there is none. The Sala de los Dos Hermanas and all the group of the Sultana's chambers, balconies, and gardens, show in their decoration more fantasy of bizarre creation. Never have architecture and poetry been more perfectly blended than here; it is the East in tribute to love. But again the beauty weighs upon you a little. To live in one of these chambers would

be like being folded in the petals of a great flower. You fancy the perfumed exhalations are still rising through the slabs of perforated marble ; and you are conscious of an over-sweet burden of too lovely things. But this elaboration is not riot ; Moorish art, here as elsewhere, obeys its own laws, and all the caprice of detail help to the beauty of one central idea.

The small Sala de Justicia has its strange, fascinating, old pictures—how I wish that it were possible to write about them now ! Then there is the small chamber near to this one, the Hall of the Abencerrages, which was the scene of the supposed slaughter of that great family, and where the red marks in the white marble still gleam like stains of blood in the softened light, giving credence to the crime fate has fastened upon the unlucky Bobabdil. And there are Yūsuf's baths of the Sultans, with their fountains, and reclining alcoves, and the gallery for the musicians, where the inscriptions and mosaics are still visible, and where all speaks so eloquently of beautiful life.

But in the Court of the Lions you find a more rare, and to me more convincing, expression of Moorish art. The place seems to reflect, as in a magic mirror, the glad, full life of that marvellous people. You feel the seductiveness of the East steal upon you, as you wait in its joyous quiet ; and life seems to move again to measures of music in delicate fetters of colour.

The Court is in the same form as the Court of the Myrtles, but smaller ; so small that the suggestion comes again that the Moors built their palaces in memory of their tents. An arcade, supported by tiny columns of wonderful slenderness, that stand

singly, or in groups of twos and threes, surround it. The leaping columns and fantastic arches look almost like a great encircling growth of palms. Low minarets rise from the tiled roofs, and at each end the arcade juts out and forms a pavilion, whose orange-shaped cupolas, gemmed with hanging stalactites, blaze with colour. Small fountains rise from marble basins at each end of the Court ; and in the centre is the Lion Fountain, its great basin of marble borne by twelve beasts, crouching very stiffly ; whereon is written the inscription :

“ O thou who examinest these lions fixed in their places, fear not, Life is wanting to enable them to show their fury.”

All the inscriptions used in the decorations here are interesting ; but there is one referring to this fountain and its limpid water, which excels all others in its wealth of imagery :

“ Examine well this cup, if thou wilt distinguish the water which runs from it ; for it will first seem to thee either that both run together, or that they remain immovable, like one of Love’s captives whose face is bathed with the tears which the envious have caused him to shed, so the water seems jealous of the stone by which it is contained, and the cup, in its turn, appears to be jealous of the limpid stream. Nothing but the generous hand of Mohamed can be compared to that which rushes from thy bosom and flies impetuously into the air. A lion is not so strong and courageous as Mohamed is liberal.”

This wonderful Court shimmers with azure and white. Its long colonnades are all paved with chequered tiles of white and blue ; its columns, the capitals in

rare Moorish work, and all different, though uniform in colour, are white, just shaded with yellow; and the ivory-plaster of the arches is the same colour. They are covered with a delicate net-pattern of finest lace; for the Moorish workmen had a quite feminine love of doing needlework upon their stone. In the alcoves and minarets of this Arabian-Night-like palace the windows have crystal-adorned jalousies; and the turquoise of the hot sky seen through these jewelled screens forms admirable blue mosaics. But never do these strong notes of blue and white grow monotonous, for on the walls and ceilings these colours are all brodered over with other tints; red and gold, deepest sapphire, and even black. The colours of these mosaics have faded to soft shades that blend into exquisite harmonies, like the twisted threads of a worn Eastern carpet. But the brilliancy of the tiles is unchanged; and the sunlight, as it flashes upon them, sets the azure moving on the marble pavement in living patterns.

The strongest impression you gather from this almost bewildering beauty is one of surprise how anything so seemingly fragile can be so strong. Think, more than five centuries have passed since this Court was built. The repeated earthquakes that have caused so much damage to the Alhambra, have done nothing to shake those columns, that look so slender, as if you could break them easily with a blow. And all the jewelled weaving of ornaments, so difficult to grasp as being quite real, has kept so much of its beauty. It almost seems as though the common superstition were true, and that the charm of fate does guard the Red Palace of the Moors.

And to understand this more fully, leave the Court

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and return again to the Plaza de los Aljibes. Then contrast the Moorish architecture you have left with the Renaissance Palace of Charles V.—that false stone set in the very centre of this Moorish jewel. The structure so much newer, yet so much older in its broken decay, is almost a ruin.

The Moorish dominion ended in Spain ; but their passage, like the ebb flow of a spring-tide, was, after all, but an incident in the life of Andalusia. For the Moorish spirit, as we have found it in Córdoba, in Toledo, in Seville, and in Granada, of which their buildings, at once so delicate and so strong, were but one expression, has moulded their conquerors into its likeness. And not in these cities only, but permeating the life of every city in Andalusia, in lesser or fuller degree, this influence will be felt ; indeed, it is not overstating the truth to say that to-day the pulse of the land still beats with Moorish life. The true, the beautiful in each nation feeds the common life of all ; and the fulfilling of the destiny of each enlarges the experience of the world.

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